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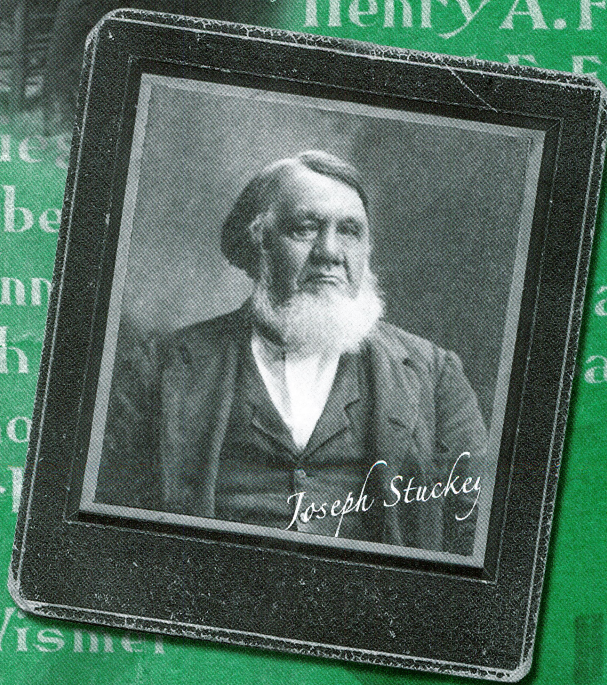


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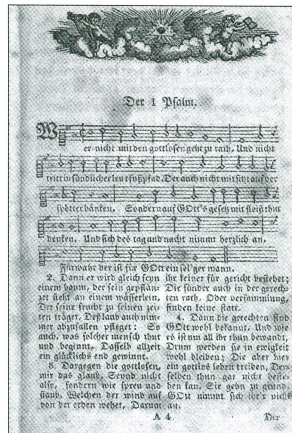
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## In this issue



**Page 2:** John Thiesen's lead article provides a broad and quick overview of the former General Conference Mennonite Church—a model of unity amidst diversity.



**Page 6:** Glenn Lehman, as Henner Martin “remembers” the 1803 meeting of Lancaster and Skippack Mennonite to chose a hymnal— or two hymnals.



**Page 7:** This annual directory lists North American Mennonite, Amish and related historical committees, societies, conference historians and interpretive centers. Here is the 2004 “pullout” edition.



**Page 11:** Ted Regehr wishes he'd been there when Tsar Alexander I visited the village of Lindenau in the Molotschna Mennonite colony in southern Russia in 1818.

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# A Model of Unity Amidst Diversity:

## The Former General Conference Mennonite Church

by John D. Thiesen

Most Mennonites of Germanic European background tend to think of Mennonites as a mostly homogeneous group in terms of ethnic or cultural origins. We often hear of the “Mennonite game” being played—as happens in many other small, cohesive social groups—tracking the many familial and associational links within the group. There is a good deal of truth to this stereotype, but it also obscures our understanding of Mennonite diversity.

*Photo: General Conference missionaries, the Petter family, lived in a tent cabin near Fonda, Oklahoma, while the church was being built. Left to right, Marie Petter, Rodolphe Petter, unknown (standing), Chief Mower, unknown, unknown, Valdo Petter, daughter of Mower, daughter of Mower, unknown, unknown.*

Credit: Mennonite Library and Archives

The former General Conference Mennonite Church exemplified more than most Mennonite bodies the diversity of Mennonite ethnic-cultural origins. It brought together Mennonite groups with quite different histories into what we might now call a “missional” denomination focused on missions (traditionally speaking) and education.

In contrast to the former “Old” Mennonite church, the General Conference was for most of its history geographically dominated by membership in the western U.S. states and the western Canadian provinces. This geographic balance was reflected in and related to the various groups who joined the General Conference over time.





Photo above: Middle District Conference meeting at Danvers, Illinois, October 1, 1898. Joseph Stuckey, host, is seated at center front with white beard. First used in *Mennonite Life*, April 1951, p. 16.

Below: Marker dedicated in 1960 in Donnellson, Iowa, commemorating Mennonite and Amish Mennonite settlement in Lee County, Iowa, with Melvin Gingerich on left and Howard Raid on the right. Credit: Iowa Mennonite Churches Collection - Melvin Gingerich)



The General Conference indeed began west of the Mississippi. It was founded by a small cluster of congregations in southeast Iowa whose members had migrated from what is today southwestern Germany during the middle third of the nineteenth century. These people came from the same areas that had produced Mennonite migrants to North America during the preceding 150 years, but they had lived through the momentous events of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars that brought many social and political changes to Europe in the early nineteenth century. They came ready for a vision for outreach that was put into action in 1860.

They quickly drew into their project the group of Mennonites associated with John Oberholtzer in eastern Pennsylvania. This group also had its origins in what is today southwestern Germany, but their ancestors had migrated to North America mostly in the colonial era, before 1776, and

thus had rather different historical experiences than the Iowa founders of the General Conference.

The numerical growth of the General Conference got its biggest boost with the arrival of Mennonites from eastern Europe—primarily the Russian Empire—in the 1870s. Most of these “Russian” Mennonites (or their parents and grandparents) had lived in the Russian Empire only 70-80 years. Before that, most had been in what is today northern Poland, the region around the city of Gdansk; this area is, in Mennonite memory, sometimes called “Prussia” or the Vistula delta. Mennonites had lived in the Gdansk area for some 300 years; many had come there from what is today the Netherlands and Belgium in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the 1870s, Mennonites in the Gdansk area, and in Russia, read, wrote, and spoke standard German and often spoke a variety of Low German, the local dialect of the Gdansk area.



The “Russian” Mennonite immigrant group had its own diversities. Mennonites in Russia came from several different geographic areas and from congregations with slight variations in their traditions. Also, there were Hutterite and Swiss-background Amish groups living in the Russian Empire who migrated along with the majority Low German Mennonites. Also arriving in North America in the 1870s were small groups coming directly from the Gdansk area, and from Galicia, an region of what is today Ukraine that was then ruled by the Austrian Empire.

All of these groups mentioned so far—migrants from southwestern Germany of the mid-19th century, Mennonites whose ancestors came in the colonial period, and the various “Russian” immigrants—ended up living together in Kansas, one of the General Conference heartlands. In the Plains states, another ethnic-cultural group became part of the General Conference picture in the 1880s. The first “foreign” mission activity of the new General Conference was with the Cheyenne and Arapaho people living in western Oklahoma. This involvement expanded in following decades to the Hopi in Arizona and to the northern Cheyenne in Montana. Thus, reflecting the western geographical balance of the General Conference, Native Americans were a GC presence for over a century.

Around this same time—the later 19<sup>th</sup> century—other Germanic-background Mennonite groups joined in the missional activities of the General Conference. These included Swiss immigrants of the mid-19th century in Midwestern locations such as Bluffton, Ohio, and Berne, Indiana.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two other prominent Mennonite groups entered the GC picture. The Central Mennonite Conference was originally of Amish background, with a preponderance of congregations in Illinois. They joined the General Conference in 1946 after many years




*Vincent and Rosemarie Harding in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1961.* Credit: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection

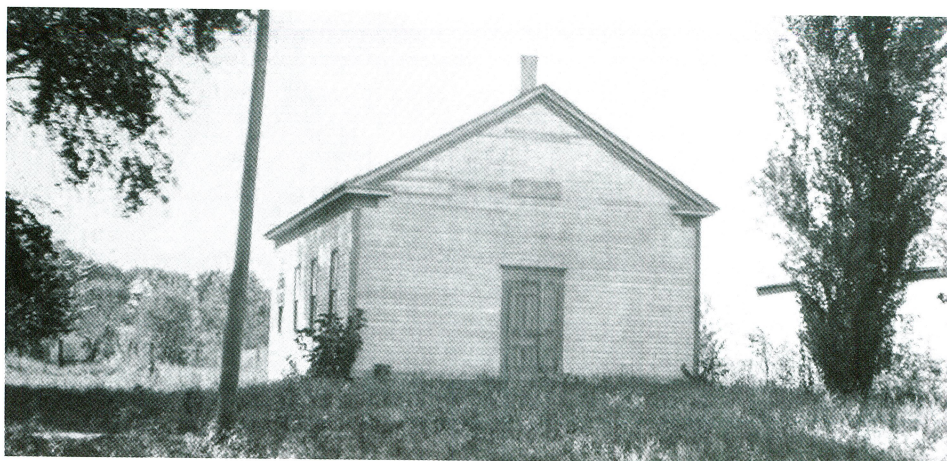
of arms-length participation in GC programs.

During the 1920s and again after World War II, large numbers of Russian Mennonites arrived in North America, going mostly to Canada this time. This influx decisively shaped the character of what is now Mennonite Church Canada, with thousands of Mennonites bringing with them experiences of violence in the Russian Revolution and World War II.

The story of GC “people of color” in North America (other than Native Americans) is largely a story of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; this is a narrative that remains to be told in any great detail. GC congregations with larger numbers of African-American members began in the 1950s, with First Mennonite and Woodlawn in Chicago being prominent in this development. Hispanic and Asian congregations came somewhat later, more in the 1970s and 1980s; Asian congregations were especially prominent in western Canada. Reflecting the western geography of the General Conference, Hispanic and Asian congregations have had much more prominence than African-American GC congregations.

This brief overview glosses over many details and local or regional developments, and ignores the many individuals of widely varying backgrounds who have participated in the General Conference throughout its history. But a look at the various ethnic-cultural groups that have come together into the mission of the General Conference gives us a picture of Mennonite diversity that is sometimes overlooked. 

*John Thiesen is archivist at the Mennonite Church USA Archives—North Newton and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas.*



*The West Point Mennonite Church in West Point, Lee County, Iowa, was used from 1863 to 1886.* Credit: Iowa Mennonite Churches Collection - Melvin Gingerich

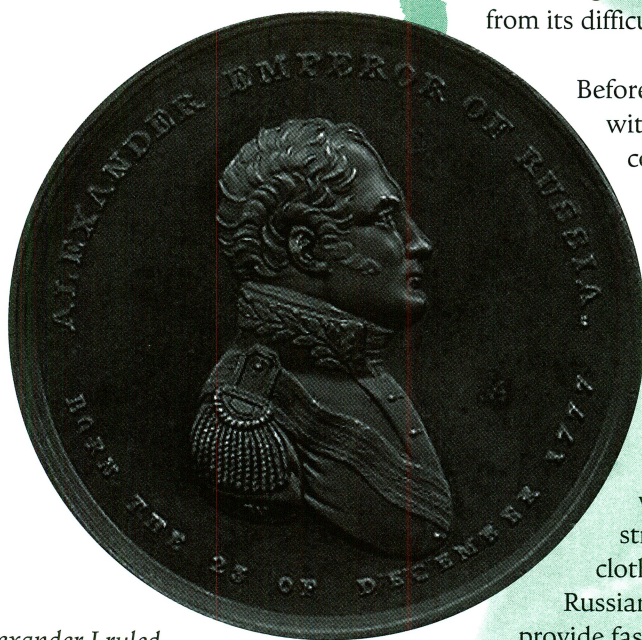




# I wish I'd been there: Tsar Alexander comes to Lindenau

by Ted Regehr

**I**wish I'd been there on 21 May 1818 when Tsar Alexander I visited the village of Lindenau in the Molotschna Mennonite colony in southern Russia. It would be interesting to see the state of the village, founded in 1804 and just emerging from its difficult pioneering years.



Before the visit, the street had been carefully swept and sprinkled with sand and the houses were colourfully decorated. The colonists wanted to demonstrate their substantial progress and to promote further migrations of Mennonites from Prussia, where people had suffered great hardship during Napoleon's occupation of that region in his 1812 campaign against Russia.

People came from many of the neighbouring Molotschna villages along the western side of the Molotschna River, and from the German Lutheran Prischib colony on the river's eastern banks. On the appointed day, in glorious spring weather, Mennonite villagers gathered on the left side of the street, the German colonists on the right. Their demeanor, clothing, personal appearance, and the place, if any, assigned to Russian peasants who had found work with the Mennonites would provide fascinating insights into early Russian Mennonite culture.

*Tsar Alexander I ruled Russia, 1801-1825. He was "a good friend and admirer of the Mennonites."*

*T. D. Regehr is professor emeritus of history, University of Saskatchewan, and the author of numerous articles and several books on Russian and Canadian Mennonite history.*

The royal procession consisted of nineteen carriages. The Tsar sat in the sixth carriage, drawn by six great horses. He disembarked, as previously arranged, at the home of David Hiebert, the village teacher and preacher, for a "breakfast" of bread, butter, onions and ham. The Tsar's gracious demeanor, particularly his insistence that the hostess occupy the best chair at the table and his gift of a ring to her, became the subject of Mennonite folklore. The Tsar's retinue, including two senior military officers in their resplendent uniforms, added colour to the occasion.

*Continued on page 13 ...*





This directory lists North American Mennonite, Amish and related historical committees, societies, conference historians, and interpretation centers. *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* publishes this list annually and would appreciate any updates or corrections from our readers. You will also find this listing on our Web site: <http://www.mcusa-archives.org/directory.html>

**Allegheny Conference Historical Committee**, Mark Moyer, 1000 Vista Dr Apt 922, Davidsville, PA 15928, 814 288-4575; Archives at PO Box 12, Somerset, PA

**Amish & Mennonite Heritage Center**, Paul J. Miller, 5798 County Road 77, PO Box 324, Berlin, OH 44610-0324, 330 893-3192, Fax: 330 893-3529, E-mail: [behalt@sssnet.com](mailto:behalt@sssnet.com), Web site: <http://pages.sssnet.com/behalt>

**Archives of Evangelical Mennonite Conference**, PO Box 1268, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0

**Atlantic Coast Conference Historian**, Margaret Derstine, 2001 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601, 717 390-4116

**Bluffton College Archives**, Paul L. Weaver, reference librarian, 280 W College Ave, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-3448, Fax: 419 358-3384, E-mail: [weaverp@bluffton.edu](mailto:weaverp@bluffton.edu), Web site: <http://www.bluffton.edu/mlibrary>

**Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives**, Dori I. Steckbeck, director, One College Ave, PO Box 3002, Grantham, PA 17027, 717 691-6048, Fax: 717 691-6042, E-mail: [archives@messiah.edu](mailto:archives@messiah.edu), Web site: <http://www.messiah.edu/archives>

**Brethren in Christ Historical Society**, E. Morris Sider, Executive director, PO Box 310, Grantham, PA 17027, 717 766-7767, Fax: 717 691-6042, E-mail: [msider@messiah.edu](mailto:msider@messiah.edu), Web site: <http://www.bic-church.org/ministries/histsoc>

**California Mennonite Historical Society**, 4824 E Butler, Fresno, CA 93727, 209 453-2225, E-mail: [kennsrem@fresno.edu](mailto:kennsrem@fresno.edu), Web site: <http://www.fresno.edu/affiliation/cmhs>

**Casselman River Area Historians**, David I. Miller, PO Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536, 301 895-4488

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John D. Thiesen, Archivist, 300 E 27th St, North Newton, KS 67117, Telephone: 316-284-5304, Fax: 316-284-5286, E-mail: [mla@bethelks.edu](mailto:mla@bethelks.edu), Web site: <http://www.bethelks.edu/services/mla>

**Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies**, 1717 S Chestnut Ave, Fresno, CA 93702, 209 453-2225, Fax: 209 453-2124, E-mail: [kennsrem@fresno.edu](mailto:kennsrem@fresno.edu), Web site: <http://www.fresno.edu/affiliation/cmbs>

**Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies**, Peggy Goertzen, Center for MB Studies, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS 67063, 316 947-3121, Fax: 316 947-2607

**Central District Conference Historical Committee**, Gordon Oyer, 110 Flora Dr, Champaign, IL 61821-3215, 217 398-0914, E-mail: [goyer@oba.uiuc.edu](mailto:goyer@oba.uiuc.edu)

**Central Plains Mennonite Conference Historian**, Barb Troyer, 1001 8<sup>th</sup> Ave, Wellman, IA 52356, 319 646-2151

**Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (Canada)**, Abe Dueck, director, 1-169 Riverton Ave, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5, 204 669-6575, Fax: 204 654-1865, E-mail: [adueck@mbconf.ca](mailto:adueck@mbconf.ca), Web site: <http://www.mbconf.ca/mbstudies/>

**Conference of Mennonites in Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, Box 7, Site 18, RR 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414, E-mail: [justpen@csdivision.com](mailto:justpen@csdivision.com)

**Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia Archives**, 303-32025 Dahlstrom Ave, Clearbrook, BC V2T 2K7, 604 850-6658, Fax: 604 850-9372, E-mail: [cminbc@uniserve.com](mailto:cminbc@uniserve.com)

**Conservative Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Elmer S. Yoder, 1136 S Prospect Ave, Hartville, OH 44632-8708, 330 877-9566

**Delaware Mennonite Historical Association**, PO Box 238, Greenwood, DE 19950

**Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association**, 31 Pickwick Dr, Leamington, ON N8H 4T5, 519 322-0456, E-mail: [freebru@wincom.net](mailto:freebru@wincom.net)

**Franconia Historical Society**, Jacob Kratz, president, PO Box 160, Franconia, PA 18924, 610 584-5536, E-mail: [jacobkratz@msn.com](mailto:jacobkratz@msn.com)





**Freeman Academy Heritage Archives**, Cleon Graber (museum), Duane Schrag and LaNae Waltner (archives), 748 S Main St, Freeman, SD 57029, 605 925-4237, E-mail: [info@freemanmuseum.org](mailto:info@freemanmuseum.org), Web site: <http://www.freemanmuseum.org>

**Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, Randall Nyce, 6133 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19144, 215 843-0943, Fax: 215 843-6263, E-mail: [gmht@meetinghouse.info](mailto:gmht@meetinghouse.info), Web site: <http://www.meetinghouse.info>

**Gulf States Mennonite Conference Historian**, Robert O. Zehr, 134 Maloney Rd, Des Allemands, LA 70030, 985 758-2974 (cell: 504 559-2980), E-mail: [bobzehr@cox.net](mailto:bobzehr@cox.net), Web site: <http://members.cox.net/bobzehr>

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**Hans Herr House Museum**, Douglas J. Nyce, 1849 Hans Herr Dr, Willow Street, PA 17584, 717 464-4438, Web site: <http://www.hansherr.org>

**Heritage Historical Library**, David Luthy, 52445 Glencolin Line, RR 4, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R3

**Historical Center, The**, J. Lloyd Gingrich, PO Box 81, Richfield, PA 17086, 717 694-3482

**Howard-Miami Counties Heritage Society Inc.**, PO Box 156, Greentown, IN 46936, 765 628-2280

**Illinois Amish Interpretive Center**, Stella Eads, 111 S Locust St, PO Box 413, Arcola, IL 61910, 217 268-3599, 888 45AMISH, E-mail: [iaic@one-eleven.net](mailto:iaic@one-eleven.net), Web site: <http://www.amishcenter.com>

**Illinois Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Gerlof Homan, 113 Eastview Dr, Normal, IL 61761-2438, 309 452-5811

**Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society**, Carolyn Nafziger, Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center, 675 State Route 116, Metamora, IL 61548-7732, 309 392-2518, Fax: 309 392-2518, E-mail: [imhgs@attbi.com](mailto:imhgs@attbi.com), Web site: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilmhgs>

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**Kidron Community Historical Society**, Bruce Detweiler Breckbill, director, Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center, 13153 Emerson Rd, PO Box 234, Kidron, OH 44636, 330 857-9111, E-mail: [kidron@sssnet.com](mailto:kidron@sssnet.com)

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**Lower Salford Historical Society**, Joshua Kratz, president, PO Box 150, Lederach, PA 19450, 610 584-5536, Fax: 610-584-1491, E-mail: [lowersalford@hotmail.com](mailto:lowersalford@hotmail.com)

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**Menno Simons Historical Library and Archives**, Lois B. Bowman, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Rd, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4177, Fax: 540 432-4977, E-mail: [bowmanlb@emu.edu](mailto:bowmanlb@emu.edu), Web site: <http://www.emu.edu>

**Menno-Hof**, Joseph Yoder, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565-0701, 260 768-4117, Fax: 260 738-4118, E-mail: [mennohof@tln.net](mailto:mennohof@tln.net), Web site: <http://www.mennohof.org>

**Mennonite Archives of Ontario**, Samuel Steiner, Conrad Grebel University College, 140 Westmount Rd N, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220 ext. 238, Fax: 519 885-0014, E-mail: [steiner@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:steiner@uwaterloo.ca), Web site: <http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao/>

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**Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley**, Merle Cordell, chairman, Roy M. Showalter, curator, 4850 Molly Pitcher Hwy S, Chambersburg, PA 17201, 717 375-4544 (Library) or 301 733-2184, Edsel Burdge, editor, *Conococheague Mennonist*, E-mail: ebbpinola@innernet.net

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**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**, Royden Loewen, PO Box 21441, Steinbach, MB R0A 2T3, 204 326-2715 or 204 786-9391, Fax: 204 774-4134, E-mail: mhsc@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca, Web site: <http://mhsc.ca>

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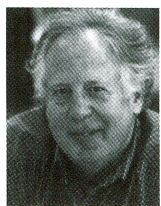


# Gesang-Buch

## I wish I'd been there: The 1803 hymnal meeting

by Glenn Lehman  
*impersonating the fictitious Henner Martin (1769-1843)*

*Henner Martin is a fictitious character in the Foresingers musical presentation to celebrate the bicentennial of hymnal publishing in America.*



Glenn Lehman, has authored three books, including *An Instrument of God's Grace*, a history of Sharing Programs. He

is employed by Harmonies Workshop, a music ministry located in Leola, Pa. He thanks John Ruth and other researchers whose work makes this account possible.

I wish I had gone to the Skippack and Lancaster hymnal meeting in 1803. Being one of the foresingers at Weaverland, I might have had something to say. I could easily have spared a day before spring planting. I could have traveled the Old (Philadelphia) Road much of the way. It is well graded, laid out in 1733 and improved several times since. Or I could have walked west a few miles and met Oberholtzer and Gehman en route to Deacon Martin Mellinger's house. Why didn't those smart preachers choose a central place like the new 1794 Bowmansville meetinghouse? I know—we need a roaring fireplace in March and beds overnight.

This meeting of the two men from Skippack and two leading bishops of Lancaster along with Deacon Mellinger was the first time I heard of Mennonites publishing a hymnal—since the *Ausbund*. We two groups enjoy close fellowship. At Weaverland we often welcome them. When they preach we hear some good German and a fresh look at our faith.

If I had gone to the meeting I would have asked the Skippack men why they included so few hymns from the *Ausbund*. I would have supported our *Gesangbuch's* inclusion of thirty-plus hymns from our old *Ausbund*. I might have asked why they used such a small typeface and no music except for the Psalter at the beginning. I would have asked them which hymnals their people bring to church. Here I have seen a wide variety of Lutheran and Reformed books used before we printed our own.

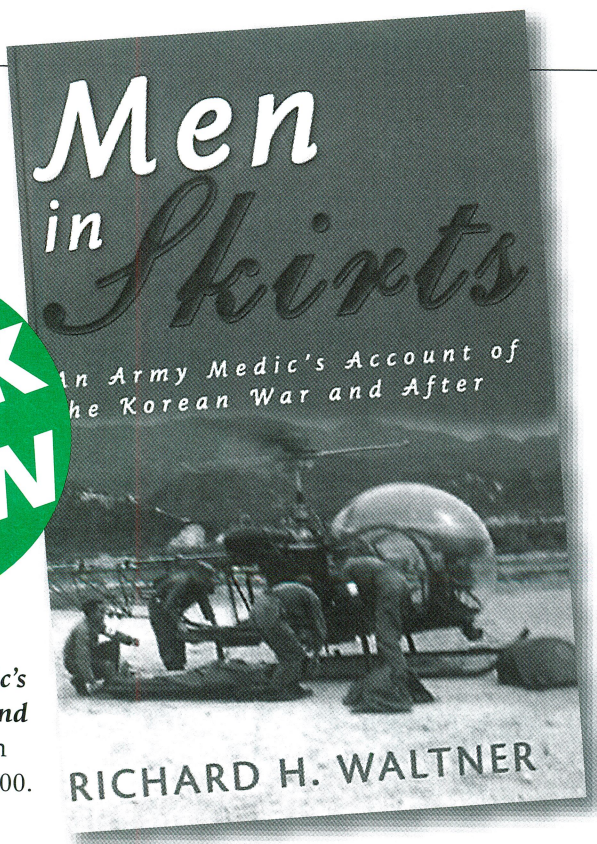
On the second day of the meeting the visitors told Mellinger they had no authority to change hymns already agreed upon. I don't know if I really care much that the two groups decided to go their separate publishing ways. After all, the easterners already had 3,000 orders for their book and had already agreed on 400 hymns. Either way a book will cost about two day's labor. I was told that the meeting ended amicably. The Skippack men went to a Germantown printer and called it *Zion's Harp*.

*Continued on page 13 ...*



# Book Review

*Men in Skirts: An Army Medic's Account of the Korean War and After.* By Richard Waltner. San Jose: Authors Choice Press. 2000.



Richard Waltner's memoir, recounting his service as a U.S. army medic during and immediately after the Korean War, helps to fill a gap in 20th century Mennonite wartime literature. While the experiences of conscientious objectors who pursued alternative service through I-W assignments and the Pax program are well-documented, less familiar are stories from men classified as 1-A-O (noncombatant) or 1-A (combatant) service. Waltner, who was drafted in 1952, went through basic army training and was assigned to work in the 120<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion, 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. His is a deeply personal portrayal of the quest for dignity in the dehumanizing context of army life.

Raised in a Mennonite family in Freeman, South Dakota, Waltner had attended college for two years before going off to Korea. His keen interest in observing social and institutional behavior—a pronounced focus of this memoir—would eventually lead him into a career as a professor of sociology at Montana State University. During the

1990s, in retirement, Waltner began to recall and write about his experiences as a young man in Korea. The task was made easier by the existence of more than 460 letters he had written to his sweetheart and future wife, Bonnie—one letter for each day of his overseas assignment. In the book's opening pages, Waltner tells of the letters' significance throughout his military experience, and as a personal archive which formed the core of his book-writing project: "It was Bonnie who gave me promise that there was life beyond Korea ... [a]nd ... who faithfully kept every letter I wrote her. ... I was never too tired to write her a daily letter telling her of the day's events. I thought I remembered most of what I experienced in Korea; however; re-reading those letters written some 47 years ago revealed to me just how much I had forgotten .... Those letters transported me back" (pp. 8, 10).

The book's title, *Men in Skirts*, evokes Waltner's disdain for military leaders who treated rank-and-file soldiers as subordinates who were unintelligent, inferior, and unworthy

of respect. Waltner argues that in the broader American culture of the early 1950s, women were generally regarded as inferior to men; so, too, power imbalances characterized military life in Korea, where career officials often regarded drafted men as flunkies, and treated them accordingly. Waltner acknowledges that in more recent decades, U.S. military culture may have changed for the better, but asserts that his characterizations reflect a deeply troubling organization in which he participated fifty years ago.

Waltner's criticisms extend not only to American military incompetence toward its own soldiers. He also describes the military as heavy-handed among South Korean civilians, especially children and prostitutes. In one instance, Waltner recounts his horror early upon arriving at Yongdung P'o, near Seoul, where young children hung around the American military compound to scavenge for food from the officers' garbage cans. As Waltner observed military police jumping from their jeeps and shooting in the direction of the children, he was appalled: "Is this why I was sent to Korea, to watch American G.I.s shooting at children? ... I was angry. At that moment, I felt chagrined to be wearing the American uniform. I needed an explanation and I needed clarification, which, of course, I never got" (pp. 25-26).

For the next fifteen months, Waltner would serve as a medic, along with other men classified as I-A-O (noncombatants), and with doctors similarly assigned to the 120<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion. Most of the physicians with whom he worked attained his respect; many were draftees who quickly adapted their medical training to the peculiarities of the war zone. Their lifesaving efforts impressed Waltner, even as he observed mistakes and instances of fallibility in handling patients. Occasionally, the dedication and compassion of his colleagues were transformative, as in a chapter



where Waltner describes the fate of a gravely wounded lieutenant, for whom surgery, prayer, and the extraordinary teamwork of the emergency room staff resulted in a miracle.

When the end of the war came on July 27, 1953, Waltner celebrated his 22nd birthday with the hope that he would quickly be able to travel home and reunite with Bonnie. For nearly 12 more months, however, as the United States continued to occupy Korea, he would remain with his medical unit, waiting for demobilization orders. He was perplexed by a bureaucracy that denied him a transfer out of Korea when he felt he should have been released on account of a medical condition, Raynaud's disease. In these latter months of service, Waltner's disdain for military life intensified. There were many reasons for his anxiousness to put the Korean War experience behind him, including an incident shortly before Christmas 1953 when, as a medic,

he had to deal with the bodies of four American G.I.s felled by "friendly fire."

Throughout the book, Waltner does not suggest that he might have preferred alternative service; nor does he self-identify as a conscientious objector. While he credits his upbringing—especially his South Dakota mother's advice, "Don't ever forget you are a child of God, and as such you are a person of great worth" (p. 18)—as carrying him through adversity, he scarcely hints at his Mennonite roots or at church teachings that would have denounced war.

Yet he came to abhor war and the byproducts of waging it. Waltner's experiences as an army medic convinced him that the military's dehumanizing of its personnel had to be fought as a daily struggle. Eventually, he wrote Bonnie that "the Army is the most dictatorial, totalitarian institution I have ever encountered and ever hope

to encounter" (p. 173).

A half-century later, Waltner laments the deaths caused by the war, especially those of fellow soldiers whom he learned to know. And he laments the loss of tradition and the disruption in the lives of the Koreans, whom he found to be patient and long-suffering. He wonders why so many Americans over the past 50 years have let memories of the Korean War slip into oblivion—in his view, a shameful misuse of history, when there are lessons to be learned from it. Thanks to Waltner's letters and remembrances, we have more reason than ever to give the Korean War, in Mennonite experience and beyond, due consideration. 🌿



Rachel Waltner Goossen teaches history at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.

### **Tsar Alexander ... cont. from page 6**

Alexander I is probably the most enigmatic Tsar in Russian history. His demeanor during the Lindenau visit contrasts sharply with the wild, raucous and dissolute life of the Tsar and the entire Russian delegation at the lengthy deliberations in Vienna following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo. His apparent respect for a humble Mennonite hostess seems incompatible with the often harsh autocratic style of government he and the other members of the Concert of Europe imposed on their people after 1815. Allegations that Alexander was involved, or at least informed beforehand, of the plot to murder his father, the insane and incompetent Tsar Paul I, add further mystery to the man, as do rumours that he may not have died in 1825, shortly after a second visit to the Molotschna colony. It has been alleged that, after an elaborately staged hoax funeral, Alexander became a mystical religious recluse trying to resolve the

contradictions of his character and to expiate the guilt of his father's murder.

Like his father, who had given Mennonites their cherished Privilegium spelling out in greater detail than any of Catharine the Great's invitations the privileges of the Mennonite colonists, Alexander was a good friend and admirer of the Mennonites. But he had little patience with some of the quarrelsome ways of Mennonite church and community leaders. That was most evident when he awarded a large gold medallion and restored to a position of authority one of the Mennonite leaders who had been banished by his own people. Was this, as the Mennonite accounts say, a man blessed of God, or an autocrat haunted by guilt and a longing for a simpler and more godly life? I wish I could have seen this mysterious man of contradictions when he first visited the Mennonites in the Molotschna colony. 🌿

### **Hymnal meeting ... cont. from page 11**

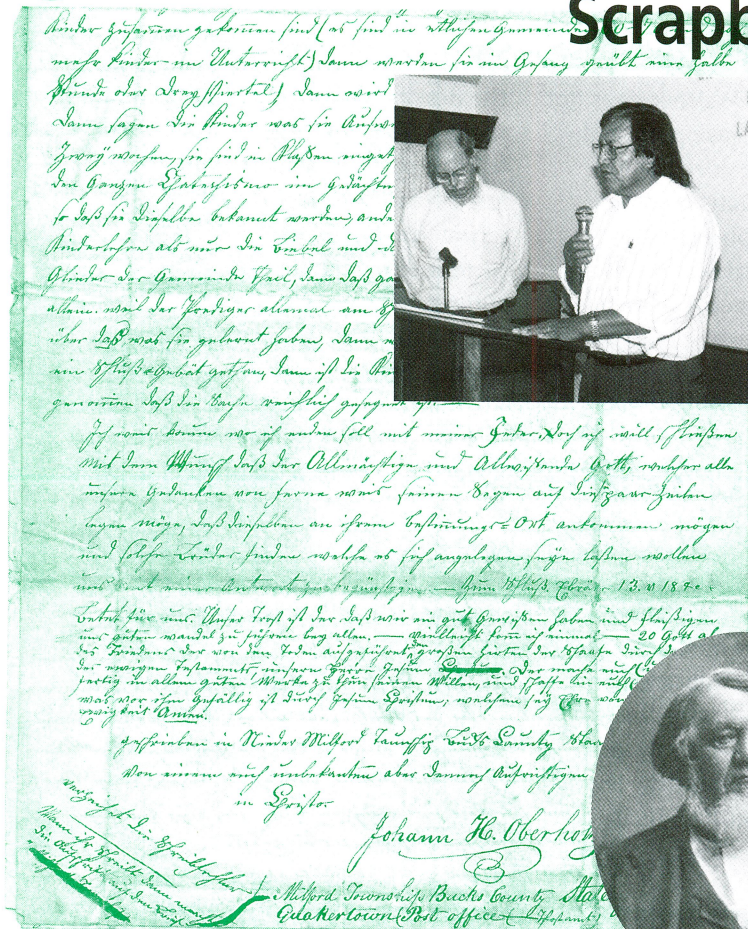
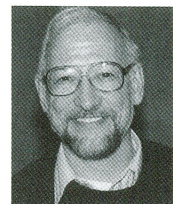
The Lancaster bishops had more diverse voices to consider. They had outlying communities around Cumberland and even Fort Pitt. Those more distant people emphatically wanted notes in the book. In a last-ditch effort to avoid publishing a second hymnal, Martin Mellinger brought several copies of *Zion's Harp* to the spring conference. But it was not at all what Lancaster people had in mind. So they took their songs to Johann Albrecht, Lancaster, printing their own book in 1804, calling it *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*. In four years it sold out its first printing of 4,000.

I've enjoyed the *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch* many years and still regret I didn't go to the meeting in 1803. 🌿



# Scrapbook page, Goshen

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist



Lawrence Hart speaking at a symposium, "Cristobal Colon and the Mennonites," sponsored by the Historical Committee and held at the Prince of Peace Iglesia Menonita in Corpus Christi, Texas, October 19-20, 1991. Hart is a Cheyenne peace chief, and served as pastor of the Indian Mennonite church from the 1960s until 1974. Hart is the director of the Cheyenne Cultural Center in Clinton, Oklahoma. On the left side of the photograph is Al Keim, chair of the Historical Committee, and on the right is Jose Matamoros, pastor of the local church. Source: Mennonite Historical Bulletin Photograph Collection.

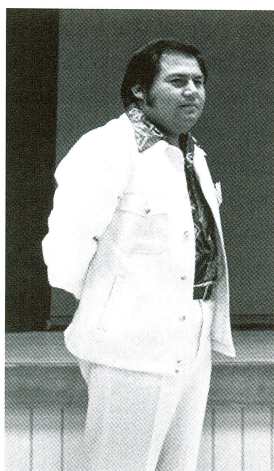


Joseph Stuckey, 1826-1902, was ordained a minister in the Amish Mennonite Rock Run church in 1860. He had been born in Alsace, France, and had emigrated with his parents to Ohio in 1830, before moving to Illinois in 1858. He left the Amish Mennonite conferences in 1872 and became an independent leader who organized the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites in 1899. In 1946 this group of twenty congregations joined the General Conference Mennonite Church. Source: Mennonite Historical Library Photograph Collection.

Interior of the Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1915, where John W. Bayley was serving as minister since 1905. He stirred up interest, roofed and refurbished the historic meetinghouse, added a stone Sunday school annex, and raised money to pay for it all. The Eastern District Conference had accepted this elderly Methodist carpenter-preacher as a Mennonite minister and elected him president of their conference. Source: Germantown Mennonite Church Collection.



In the late 1970s, Victor Alvarez and his family served as leaders of a group of about eighteen Hispanic Spanish-speaking persons within the Houston (Texas) Mennonite Church. Houston Mennonite began in 1967 and was first an associate member of the General Conference Mennonite Church before becoming a full member. Source: Hispanic Mennonite Convention Photograph Collection.



An eight page 1849 letter written and signed by John H. Oberholtzer (1809-1895), an early leader of the General Conference Mennonite Church at Quakertown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It was written to unidentified friends in Germany. Oberholtzer provided an evaluation of Mennonites in America, emphasizing church renewal more than the 1847 church division in his own community in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He wrote, "In the end, many of our people clung too tightly to externals as is seen already in the case of the Galatians and others in the early period of Christianity. ... I shall therefore for the present not say any more about the general corruption but will now tell you about our Reformation" [word is underlined in original]. This is a handwritten original letter, in Gothic script, filling 8 legal size pages. It was purchased by Harold S. Bender from Emil Wuerz, South Germany, in 1936, and it has been published in German (1937) and English (1972). Oberholtzer's great-great-grandfather had emigrated to the United States from Switzerland in 1702.

Source: John H. Oberholtzer Collection.



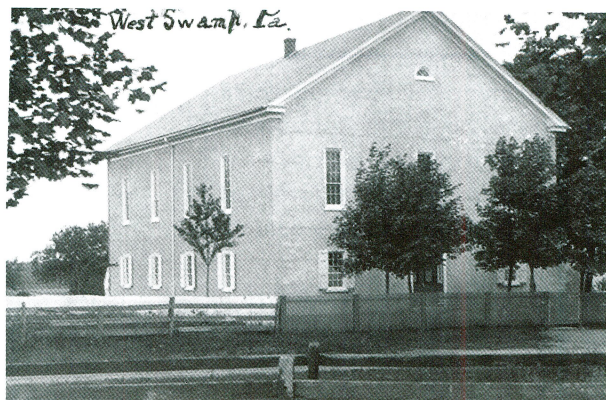
# Scrapbook page, North Newton

by John D. Thiesen, Archivist

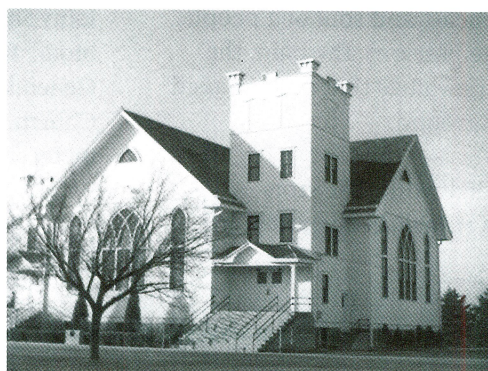


## 1683-1906 MINISTER OFFICIATING IN THIS CHURCH

Wilhelm Rittenhouse	George Hellerman
Jacob Gaetschalk	F.R.S. Hunsicker
Hans Neues	Israel Biedler
Herman Kasdorp	Abraham Hunsicker
Martin Kolb	Henry A. Hunsicker
Dirck Keyser	John M. Hulteman
Nicholas Rittenhouse	N. Bertolet Grubb
John Gorgas	William McCarter
John Conrads	Henry A. Frederick
Jacob Funk	Albert E. Funk
Andrew Ziegler	Silas M. Grubb
Abraham Oberholtzer	Samuel M. Musselman
Heinrick Pennebaker	Frank E. Gabel
David Ruth	John W. Bayley
Joseph Showalter	
Jacob Oberholtzer	
Johann Hock	
Abraham Wismer	
Jacob Gross	
Christian Haldeman	
Johan Bergey	
Heinrich Hunsicker	
Matthias Pennebecker	
John Minnich	



Above, left: West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pennsylvania, built in 1873. Above, right: Children at the entrance of Woodlawn Mennonite Church, Chicago, Illinois in the early 1960s(?). First used in *Mennonite Life*, March 1988, p. 24.



Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kansas, in about 1948. The original membership was Swiss Volhynian immigrants who had come to Kansas in the 1870s from Volhynia, Russia. Their church was Hopefield Mennonite, which joined the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1881. A split in this congregation in 1895 led to form this Eden congregation, which joined the General Conference in 1896.

Source: Mennonite Encyclopedia Photograph Collection

List of ministers of the Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was back in 1683 that immigrants from Krefeld, on the Rhine River in Germany, had established this congregation and elected their first minister, William Rittenhouse, in 1699. This congregation had joined the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1884.

Source: Germantown Mennonite Church Collection.

Below: Mennonites leaving Russia for Canada, ca. 1923. An emigrant train at the Lichtenau station, Molochna, Russia. First used in *Mennonite Life*, July 1948, p. 42.





## The back page

### An enlarged treasury of stories

Since 1995, when I became involved in the integration/transformation process—which, in my opinion, had its strongest impetus in the 1941-1946 Civilian Public Service experience—I have said there are two reasons we should do it. First, for once we're not splitting; we're getting together. Second, we will inherit new streams of history, which will reshape our sense of identity and enlarge our treasury of stories.

My critique of the process was that we did not start with story; we started with issues of polity, geographical boundaries, and structural charts. These, of course, did not and do not create a groundswell of enthusiasm.

There is something powerful and profound in the telling and the hearing of stories. Narratives take us beyond the surface to the heart and soul of a people. Hearts and souls reveal the passions, the pain, the joy, the motivations, and the values that have shaped a people. And here is holy ground.

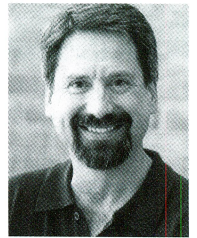
So now we must do remedial work. The story collection, *Gathering at the Hearth*, is one attempt

to tell some of the essential narratives. There are many more. We would do well to build into our gatherings—conferences, assemblies, board and committee meetings—a time for storytelling. We do it for children; we should do it for ourselves.

We do, indeed, have an enlarged pool of stories. Former MCs are often surprised to discover Amish roots in the GC story; surprised to hear about South German and Swiss heritage; surprised to hear about the early missions to Native Americans; surprised by the growth of Asian Mennonites; fascinated with the more recent migration stories. (Migrations will be the theme of the April issue.) And former MCs are sometimes surprised to learn that the General Conference (1860) was established before the Mennonite Church (1898), in spite of its more recent migrations.

John Thiesen's lead article gives a broad and quick overview of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Within this broad sweep are many stories that wait to be told.

—John E. Sharp, editor



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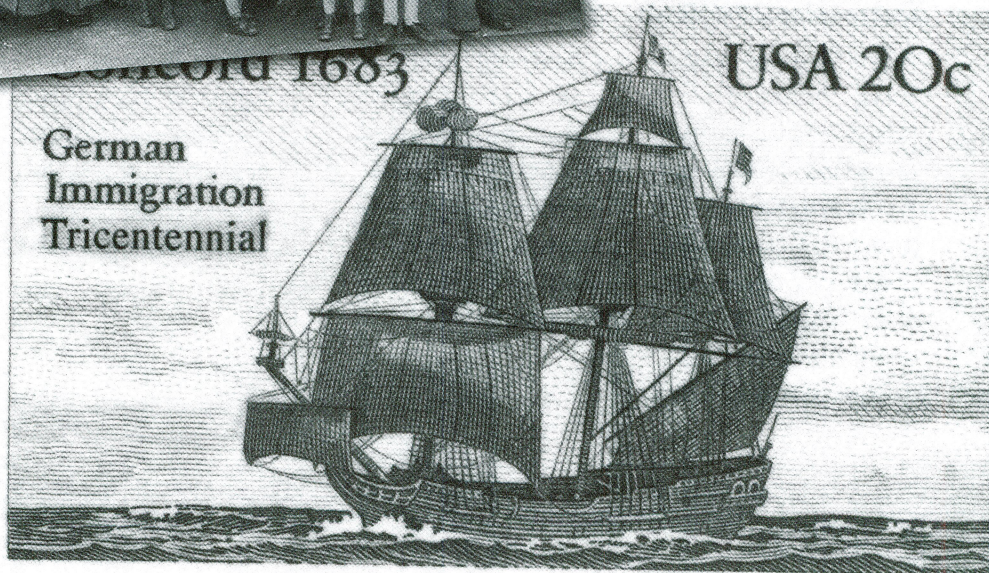
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Mennonite  
Memory

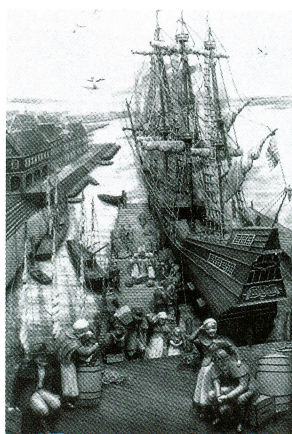
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## In this issue



**Page 2:** John Ruth tells the story of the 1710 transatlantic voyage of twenty-nine Palatine Mennonites. Their arrival in the Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania marks the beginning of the Lancaster Mennonite settlement. Ruth also gives a voice to the Conestogas and Conoys, the original settlers, who were displaced.



**Page 6:** Using descriptive travel diaries, S. Duane Kauffman, recounts the ocean passage of twenty Amish families aboard the *Charming Nancy* in 1737, which "called for adaptability, stamina, and a deep reservoir of faith." Their arrival led to the first organized Amish congregation in North America.



**Page 9:** Royden Loewen writes of two peoples who settled in Canada—Russian and Swiss-German Mennonites—who differed in language and the geography of their recent history, but shared a love for the land.



**Page 12:** The Reformed Church of Zurich issues an invitation to Anabaptist descendants to attend a historic ceremony of acknowledgement, June 26.

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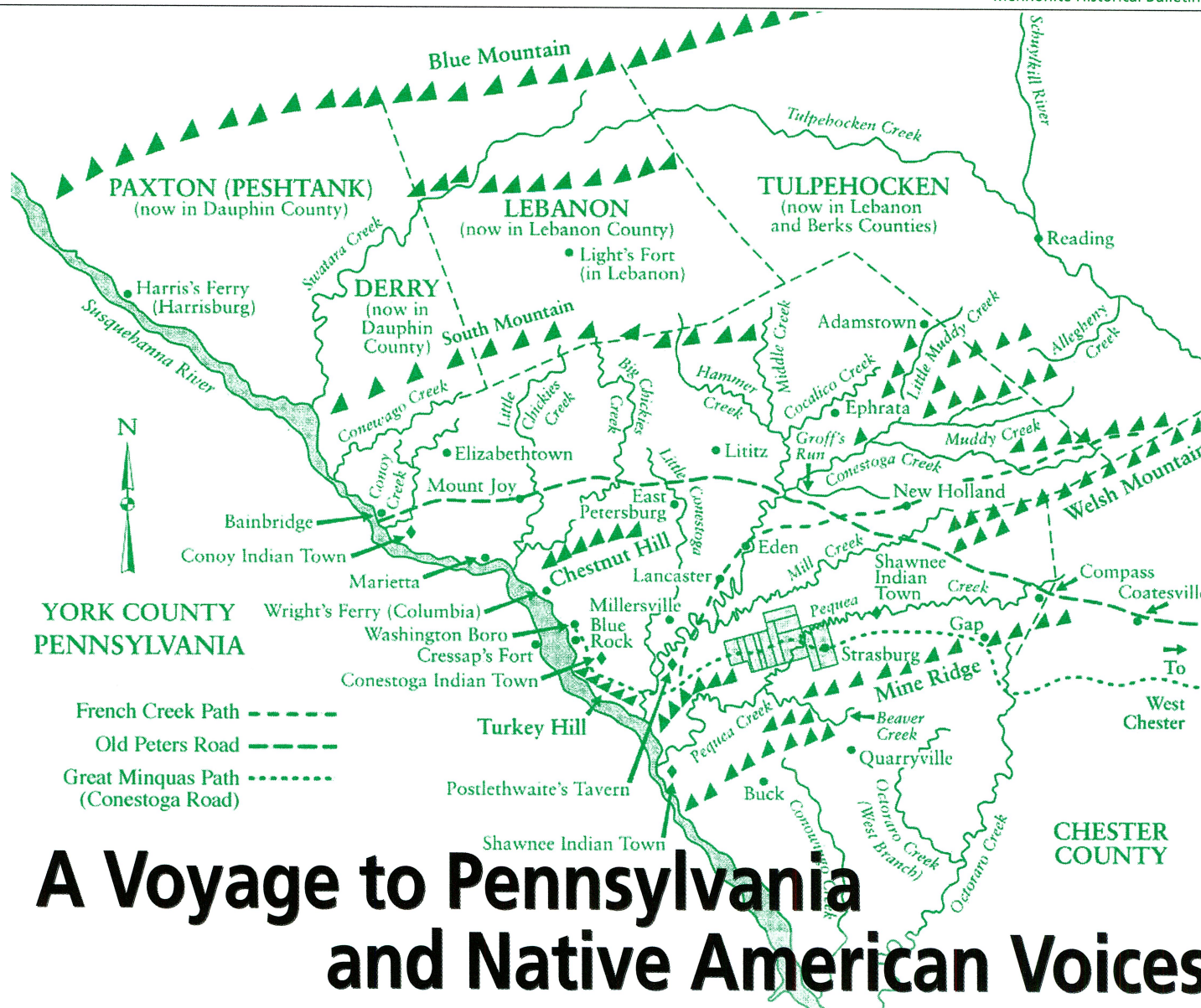
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# A Voyage to Pennsylvania and Native American Voices

by John L. Ruth

Twenty-nine Palatine Mennonites boarded the *Mary Hope* on the Thames River in London, June 24, 1710. An eleventh-hour decision changed the destination of these Lancaster County pioneer families from Carolina to Pennsylvania. Their final act before sailing away from European shores was to send a letter of gratitude to Dutch Mennonites for their financial assistance of 200 Guilders—assistance they would render many more times. The 94 passengers landed in Philadelphia, September 23, 1710.

Crossing the Atlantic in the midst of the War of the Spanish Succession [1701-1714] was not without its frightening moments. Within an hour after the *Mary Hope* left London on the Thames River, it ran over a little boat and drowned a boy. Soon thereafter it bumped another ship, with the result that a new captain was brought on board.<sup>66</sup> After stopping at Gravesend and Harwich, the little vessel then sailed toward a flotilla of large Russian battleships, towering over the merchant ships around them “like so many superb castles among mediocre houses.”<sup>67</sup> To avoid trouble from French warships or privateers, the captains of the *Mary Hope* and six other America-bound vessels, carrying a total of only four cannon among them, wished to sail along with this Russian convoy until well out from the British coast.

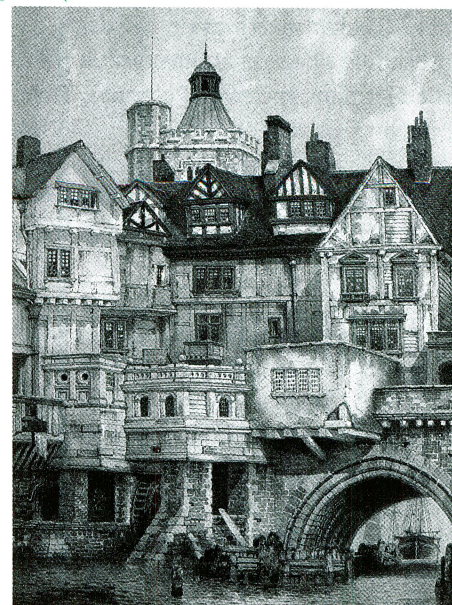


Photo: London bridge



Also joining the “Muscovy” fleet was the ship carrying Christopher von Graffenried (and, apparently, Franz Ludwig Michel) toward Virginia.<sup>68</sup> Though they debarked on “a beautifully calm Sunday,” a storm soon made most of the passengers seasick, snapped off several masts, and sent the *Mary Hope* back to Harwich for three days of repairs. Finally, as the little fleet headed toward Shetland Island, the protecting Russians turned north, leaving seven smaller, westbound vessels on their own. Almost at once the passengers were badly scared by the appearance of several French warships until a heavy fog settling in provided an escape.<sup>69</sup>

From then on, it was to be a very pleasant voyage indeed. “I think that I never was on a more healthy vessel,” commented the well-traveled Quaker Chalkley,<sup>70</sup> who, like fellow passenger Samuel Guldin, was keeping a journal. The many fascinating sights included seafowl, porpoises, and flying fish. Whales swam by, spouting in an “imposing order” that reminded Pastor Guldin of a procession of cows. When a “great storm” broke out, the passengers seemed to watch the mountainous waves from the deck “without fear.”<sup>71</sup> On Sundays and Thursdays, Chalkley held Quaker meetings on the deck, preaching once via an interpreter to the German-speaking Palatines. These folk, he recorded optimistically, seemed “tender” and moved by his words. They “behaved soberly,” he noted, “and were well satisfied; and I can truly say, I was well satisfied also.”<sup>72</sup>

After the last of the six accompanying ships turned away from the *Mary Hope* on August 14, there was another month of good sailing before land was sighted. To imagine that sensation, we might quote no better description than one by a German schoolmaster arriving a little more than a century later. Even two days before land was sighted, he recorded, a sailor told the

passengers that “he could already smell America!” Though the passengers at first laughed, all of them, after paying closer attention, “also felt a sweet, pleasant aroma, because a gentle wind came there from us.” When they finally entered the Delaware Bay,

we saw right and left the land that we had wished to see with such great desire for such a long time, although still in the distance, since the bay at its mouth is very wide; but the farther we went in, the closer the banks on both sides came toward us. We then ran from one side of the ship to the other, so as to overlook or miss nothing, and still one had seen this, another that which the rest had not seen. It is an indescribable joy when one has seen nothing in such a long time except sky and water and now all of a sudden sees the wonderful green of the forests, the mountains, the valleys and fields.

The view on “both sides of the beautiful low bank” of the Delaware brought the travelers “the greatest pleasure, and everyone was cheerful and breathed joy.”<sup>73</sup>

So, too, the sight of land on September 16, 1710, brought the *Mary Hope*’s passengers “a great and general

rejoicing.” By nightfall the ship was in the Delaware Bay, its passengers feeling safe at last from the threat of pirates. Not one had died or even been ill on the voyage.<sup>74</sup>

After first getting stuck on a sandbar, the ship had “a very pleasant voyage” up the river. When a pilot was brought aboard and again at the first stop at Newcastle, sacks of apples and peaches were distributed on the deck; the salt-meat-weary travelers declared it “the largest and finest fruit they had ever seen.” Some of them were so eager to feel the land that they walked along on the shore. Chalkley particularly noted the reaction of the Palatine Mennists to the new landscape, so uncrowded in comparison to the Kraichgau they had left. With observant farmers’ eyes, they appeared to be “wonderfully pleased with the country, greatly admiring the pleasantness and fertility of it.”<sup>75</sup>

If the admiration of the Herrs, Kundigs, Multers, and Mylins for the sandy Delaware shores was strong enough to register on someone not understanding their language, what would be their enthusiasm over the “goodness of the Soyll” they were soon to find in Susquehanna country? If only someone had been watching and recording then!



Herr house





Lancaster farm

### Native American Voices

Just as Lancaster's Mennist pioneers were regaling themselves with fresh American fruit and landscape along the Delaware, Pennsylvania's governor was meeting upstream in Philadelphia with a small group of Conestoga Indians, including their queen Conguegas. Four summers earlier, after she had dreamed of meeting William Penn in London, she had advised her people to listen to Thomas Chalkley preach.

In this summer of 1710, Conguegas could hardly have dreamed that some of her people's forested home would shortly be surveyed for a set of non-English-speaking families coming with Chalkley from London on his latest voyage and landing at Philadelphia two days later. Nor could she have envisioned, as her little party of Conestogas and Conoys laid down before the governor's council "four bundles of skins or furs . . . to make him a cover for his table," that there would ever be any change in the policy of the William Penn she had heard preach in her dream. No doubt she was glad to hear the governor say that Pennsylvania's officials still "loved [the Conestogas] as their brothers."<sup>76</sup>

Since most of the following chapters of this narrative will be about Palatine and Swiss families taking over the rich Susquehanna bottoms, it is fitting to pause and listen to Native voices expressing their own longings for a

peaceful home by the Conestoga. Their words had been spoken a few months earlier while the twenty-nine Palatines in London had been waiting impatiently to embark for Pennsylvania. North to Conestoga's village had come three chiefs of the Tuscarora tribe, from what the white man was calling Carolina, where Christopher von Graffenried was about to establish his New Bern on their lands. Within a year desperate Natives attacked this invasive Palatine settlement and killed many of the homesteaders.

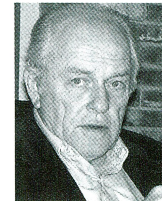
Who were those marauding people? In 1710, before von Graffenried's boat arrived, the Tuscaroras had been dreaming of a possible new home in Pennsylvania. With that in mind, their chiefs had carried eight belts of wampum north to Conestoga, where they thought they might find peace with and protection from the powerful northern Five Nations, to which the Conestogas were subject.

One of the wampum belts the Tuscarora chiefs brought to Pennsylvania was in the name of their "old Women," who hoped "that without danger or trouble they might fetch wood & water" at a new home in Conestoga. Another was for their children, desiring "room" for them "to sport & Play without danger of Slavery." The "young men fitt to Hunt" hoped to be able to leave their villages to "Seek Provisions. . . without fear of Death." Another belt asked for

peace so that the Tuscaroras might "not be afraid of a mouse, or any other thing that Ruffles the leaves." Finally, as these threatened "Indians" sought a new home by the Susquehanna, it was in hope of a place where they could "lift up their heads without danger or fear."<sup>77</sup>

Were such poignantly expressed Native yearnings for a peaceful life at Conestoga any less genuine than those of the approaching Swiss-Germans? 🌿

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*John L. Ruth, storyteller, minister, film maker, videographer and author, is at home in Harleysville, Pa, near the Salford Mennonite*

*meetinghouse, where he has served as minister.*

### (Endnotes)

<sup>66</sup> Samuel Guldin, "Diary," quoted in IDL (Ira D. Landis), "Faith's Pure Shrine," 28.

<sup>67</sup> Von Graffenried, *Account of . . . New Bern*, 366.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Guldin, "Diary," quoted in IDL, "Faith's Pure Shrine," 28.

<sup>70</sup> Chalkley, quoted in *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Guldin, "Diary," quoted in *ibid.*, 29.

<sup>72</sup> Chalkley, "Journal," quoted in *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Heinrich Jonas Gudehus, *Journey to America* ("My Emigration to America in the year 1822"), trans. Larry M. Neff, in *Ebbes fer Alle-Ebber, Ebbes fer Dich*, Publications of the PGS (Pennsylvania German Society), 14 (Breinigsville, Pa.: PGS, 1980), 206.

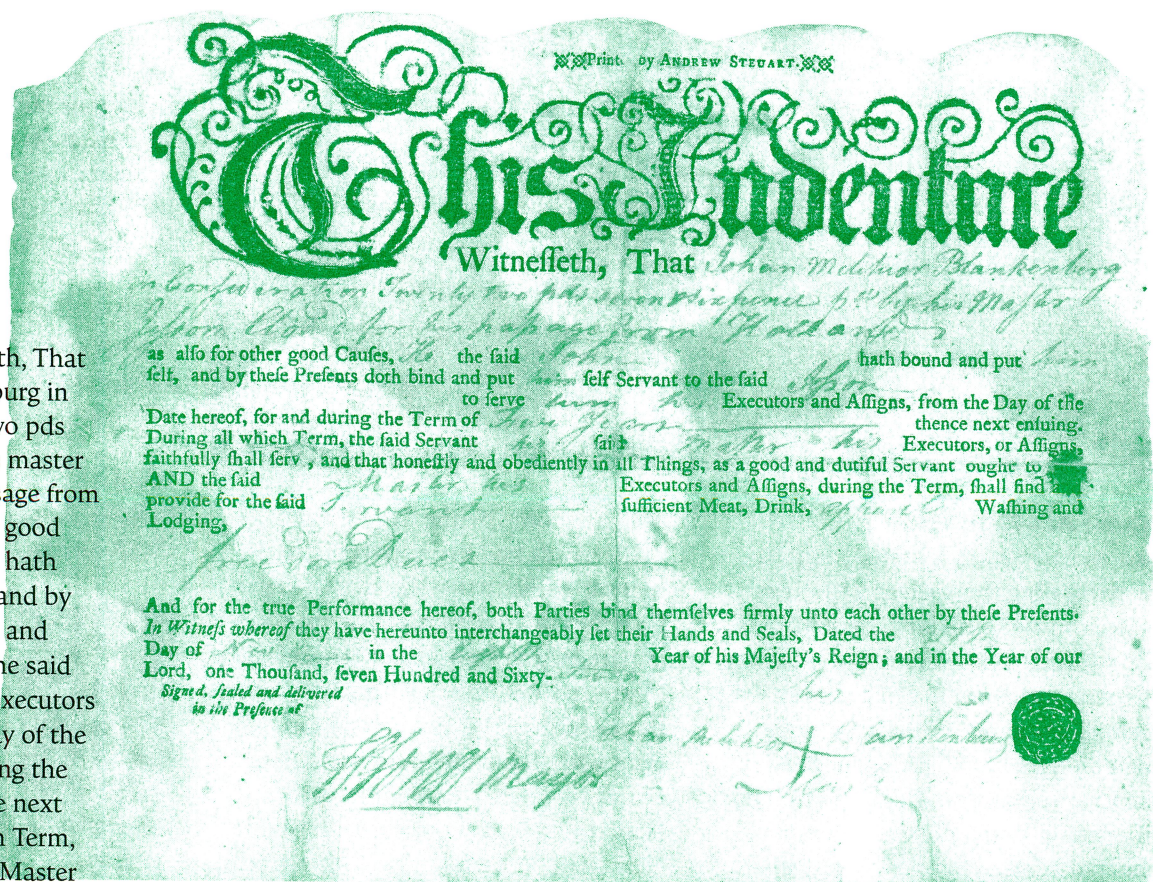
<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Chalkley, "Journal," quoted in IDL, "Faith's Pure Shrine," 28.

<sup>76</sup> Minutes of a meeting between Lieutenant Governor Charles Gookin and "The Queen of the Conestogo Indians, Ojuncho, & two Chiefs more, and some of the Conois Indians" at Philadelphia, Sept. 21, 1710, *Colonial Records*, 2: 538.

<sup>77</sup> Report of a meeting between Colonel John French and Henry Worley, and Terrutawanaren and Teonnottein (Tuscarora chiefs), Civility (Conestoga chief), "four Chief more of y<sup>e</sup> nacon," and Opressa, Shawnee "king," June 8, 1710, "at Conestogoe," *Colonial Records*, 2:533-4.





This Indenture Witnesseth, That Johan Melchior Blankenburg in Consideration Twenty two pds seven sixpence pd. by his master Jehson Cloud for his passage from Holland as also for other good Causes, He the said John hath bound and put him self, and by these Presents doth bind and put him self Servant to the said Jehson to serve him his Executors and Assigns, from the Day of the Date hereof, for and during the Term of Five Years thence next ensuing. During all which Term, the said Servant his said Master his Executors, or Assigns, faithfully shall serve, and that honestly and obediently in all Things, as a good and dutiful Servant ought to [do].

AND the said Master his Executors and Assigns, during the Term, shall find [and] provide for the said Servant sufficient Meat, Drink, apparel Washing and Lodging, freedom Dues And for the true Performance hereof, both Parties bind themselves firmly unto each other by these Presents In Witness whereof they have hereunto interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, Dated the 27th Day of Nov. in the Eighth Year of his Majesty's Reign; and in the Year of our Lord, one Thousand, seven Hundred and Sixty-Seven.

Signed, sealed and delivered in the Presence of his Mark X Johan Melchior Blankenburg

Photo: Johan Melchior Blankenburg indenture contract

## An Amish Voyage to America

by S. Duane Kauffman

Though most of the Amish who migrated to America did so in the early nineteenth century, an overwhelming majority of today's Mifflin County [Pennsylvania] Amish and Mennonites are descended from those who made the move a century earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Fixing the exact date of the first Amish arrivals in America is not possible. Names such as Brandt, Bricker, Hershberger, Hostetter, Huber, King, Kurtz, Lichty, Shirk, Zimmerman, and Zug, which were found in Lancaster County as early as the 1720s, were previously common among the Alsatian and Palatine Amish.<sup>2</sup> If they had Amish origins, their failure to establish an Amish congregation after arriving and their early separation from the established Amish bodies in Europe suggest a minimal level of commitment that would have been easily relinquished in a new setting.

According to persisting oral tradition, the American Amish story begins with a widow Barbara Yoder who with her nine small children settled in Oley Township in Berks County, Pennsylvania, sometime before 1720. This account was first printed by John Hertzler in his 1885 *Hertzler Genealogy* and promoted and embellished by C. Z. Mast in his speeches and writings. This foundational assertion has been greatly modified by recent research, which places the Yoders into the context of Bern Township in the early 1740s.<sup>3</sup>



Though the possibility of Amish arrivals before that year is speculative, by 1727 names of good candidates are found sprinkled on the lists of ship passengers.<sup>4</sup>

On October 8, 1737, the *Charming Nancy* docked at Philadelphia, carrying at least twenty Amish family heads that can be proven genealogically. The vessel has been likened to an “Amish Mayflower” by Amish historian David Luthy,<sup>5</sup> and Dr. John A. Hostetler has dubbed it the “first Amish ship.”<sup>6</sup>

Though conditions in Europe were almost intolerable, the choice to come to America was not an easy one. The unknowns that lay ahead weeded out the fainthearted. The traumatic ocean journey called for adaptability, stamina, and a deep reservoir of personal faith. One of the early Amish settlers sent an ominous letter to Europe warning:



Photo: Wood carving of Amish immigrants arriving at the port of Philadelphia as imagined by artist Aaron Zook.

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Photo: The barn on “Contentment”, the homestead of 1749 Amish immigrants, Jacob and Catherine Reugy Hertzler. Hertzler was a minister in the Northkill settlement, the earliest known organized Amish congregation in North America. The Northkill Amish cemetery is on this farm.

If you are in Germany, Switzerland, or Strasburg, Alsace, and have not the opportunity to follow our sect on account of the “government” and you care for the salvation of your souls, I would advise you to come to me for perhaps you are poorly off in worldly goods, and in this country is a very good living. I would assist you as much as my means, yet I would not bid you to come, for should it go badly with you on your journey, you would blame me.<sup>7</sup>

A diary attributed to Hans Jacob Kauffman, written in the margins of an almanac, provides poignant details of his voyage on the *Charming Nancy*. The translation is as follows:

The 28th of June while in Rotterdam getting ready to start my Zernbli died and was buried in Rotterdam. The 29th we got under sail and enjoyed one and a half days of favorable wind. The 7th of July, early in the morning, Hans Zimmerman’s son-in-law died.

We landed in England the 8th of July, remaining 9 days in port during which 5 children died. Went under sail the 17th of July. The 21 of July my own Lisbetli

died. Several days before Michael’s Georgli had died.

On the 29th of July three children died. On the first of August my Hansli died and the Tuesday previous, 5 children died. On the 3rd of August contrary winds beset the vessel and from the first to the 7th of the month 3 more children died. On the 8th of August, Shambien’s Lizzie died and on the 9th Hans Zimmerman’s Jacobli died. On the 19th, Christian Burgli’s child died. Passed a ship on the 21st. A favorable wind sprang up. On the 28th Hans Gasi’s wife died. Passed a ship 13th of September. Landed in Philadelphia on the 18th and my wife and I left the ship on the 19th. A child was born to us on the 20th - died - wife recovered. A voyage of 83 days.<sup>8</sup>

The number of deaths and the length of the *Charming Nancy*’s journey were not unusually great. In a heart-rending account of his 1750 voyage to America, a German craftsman named Gottlieb Mittelberger exposed the exploitation of the immigrants by those in charge and vividly detailed the unbearable conditions on the crowded vessel. In



commenting on ship mortality, he said:


Children from one to seven years rarely survive the voyage; and many a time parents are compelled to see their children miserably suffer and die from hunger, thirst, and sickness, and then to see them cast into the water. I witnessed such misery in no less than thirty-two children in our ship, all of whom were thrown into the sea. The parents grieve all the more since their children find no resting-place in the earth, but are devoured by the monsters of the sea. It is a notable fact that children, who have not yet had the measles or small-pocks [sic], generally get them on board the ship, and most die of them. Often a father is separated by death from his wife and children, or mothers from their little children, or even both parents from their children; and sometimes whole families die in quick succession; so that often many dead persons lie in the berths beside the living ones, especially when contagious diseases have broken out on board the ship.<sup>9</sup>

Mittelberger also commented on the tragic lot of the large number of redemptioners who sold their labor as indentured servants to pay for their passage. In most cases, the person had agreed to the arrangement voluntarily as the only means for getting to America.<sup>10</sup> On other occasions, individuals were kidnapped by unscrupulous captains and sold to the highest bidder in the American port.

One such case was Ludwig (Lewis) Riehl, the ancestor of all Amish and Mennonite Riehls. According to oral tradition, around 1750, at age eight he was abducted, taken to America, and bound as an indentured servant to a cruel master until he reached the age of twenty-one. After suffering physical abuse and the indignity of sleeping with the hogs, he escaped and found a home with the Chester County Amish.

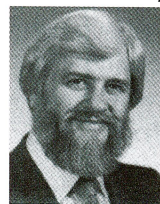
An indenture, dated 1767, bearing the name of John Melchoir [sic] Blankenburg, has been handed down in the Plank family. According to tradition, he was the same Melchoir [sic] Plank who died in Mifflin County around 1815. The story of the Planks' coming to America is as follows:

While living in Rotterdam, they boarded a ship to bid farewell to friends who were leaving for America. The ship captain assured them the anchor would not be lifted till morning so they spent the night with their friends. However the ship left during the night and the Planks awoke to the shocking reality that they had been kidnapped. Upon their arrival in Philadelphia they were sold as indentured servants to pay for their passage.<sup>11</sup>

In his writings C. Z. Mast identified five eastern Pennsylvania Amish congregations that existed in the Colonial Period: Northkill, Tulpehocken, Maiden creek, Conestoga, and Goshen. Recent research suggests that West Conestoga, Cocalico, and Compass should be added, bringing the total of Amish settlements that existed prior to the American Revolution to eight. Of these, only the one represented by the Conestoga Mennonite congregation near Morgantown has had a continuing existence. 

From *Mifflin County Amish and Mennonite Story 1791-1991* by S. Duane Kauffman, pp. 17-19. Published by the Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society, 1991. Used with permission.

S. Duane Kauffman, *Perkasie, Pa.*, is retired from teaching history at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, and is helping prepare for the school's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in July.



## (Endnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Exceptions include names like Allgyer, Bawel, Headings, Knepp, Moose, Peight, Stayrook, Swarey, and Wayre who either migrated in the nineteenth century or joined the Amish group during that time.

<sup>2</sup> See C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonites in America* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1909), p. 120. See also tax lists for Lancaster County that are available. In his 1831 article in *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, Redmond Conyngham claims the settlers who arrived in the Pequea Valley from 1710 to 1720 were a mixture of Amish and Mennonites. Though most of his ideas were arrant speculation, some of his intriguing points have not been entirely disproven.

<sup>3</sup> For the traditional story see John Hertzler, *Hertzler Family Genealogy* (Elkhart, Ind., 1885), pp. 189-190. See also C.Z. Mast, *Annals of the Conestoga Valley* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1942), p. 269, and *A Brief History of Bishop Jacob Mast and Other Mast Pioneers* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1911), pp. 431-432, as well as his article entitled "Early Pennsylvania Amish History," Rachel W. Kreider, *Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies* (Gordonville, Pa., 1986), pp. 489-493, and Don Yoder, "The King-Gnagi Connection," *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* (January 1983), pp. 2-5.

<sup>4</sup> For these records see the three-volume William J. Hincke, ed., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808* (Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, 1934).

<sup>5</sup> David Luthy, "Two Waves of Amish Migration," *Family Life* (March 1988), p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> John A. Hostetler, *Amish Society* (Baltimore, 1980, Third Edition), p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> This was one of a number of translations of old notes found in the files of the late Dr. D. Heber Plank of Morgantown, Pennsylvania. The present holder desires to remain anonymous. The writer of several of the notes is identified as Hanz Lantz. It is quite likely he was the author of this letter as well.

<sup>8</sup> This translation was found in correspondence between Dr. D. Heber Plank of Morgantown and Philadelphia genealogist, William Mervine. It is in the Mervine Collection filed under "Plank Family Notes," in the Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Pa. There is no evidence that the diary was in fact kept by Hans Jacob Kauffman. In the correspondence, Plank demonstrates a lack of knowledge about some of the basic facts of Amish genealogy. According to Dr. Plank, the diary and the other notes mentioned above were found in old martyrs' book that had been handed down from his grandfather, Bishop Peter Plank. According to Dr. Plank, Bishop Plank's wife was the daughter of the "Right Reverend" Hans Jacob Kauffman who arrived

Endnotes continued on page 11 ...



# Dutch & Swiss Mennonites take root in Canada: Two peoples, one identity

by Royden Loewen

*The first boatload of Mennonite immigrants from Russia arrive at The Forks, the junction of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, Winnipeg, August 1, 1874.*

Source: MC USA Archives—North Newton

*Mennonites exchanged the southern steppes of Russia for the central plains of the United States and Canada in the 1870s. There they encountered Mennonites of Swiss and Palatine origins, already in the fourth and fifth generations of their North American sojourn. While differing in language and the geography of their recent history, they shared a love of the land and a desire to create communities of “simplicity, peace, self-sufficiency, and separation from worldly society.”*

**Mennonite Board of Guardians.**  
CERTIFICATE OF IDENTIFICATION.

This is to certify that the bearer of this \_\_\_\_\_  
and family \_\_\_\_\_ adults, and  
children (between 6 and 14 years of age), and  
infants are entitled to be forwarded from Europe to their new  
homes in America under the privileges stipulated in our agree-  
ment between the Mennonite Board of Guardians, the Inman  
Steamship Company and the Erie Railway Company, dated  
January 23rd, 1875.

Jan. 23rd, 1875. *Chr. Krehbiel*  
Pres. Menn. Board of Guardians, Elmira, N.Y.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Ag. Menn. Board of Guardians, Elmira, Germany

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Countersigned by \_\_\_\_\_  
For Inman Line of Royal W. & Co. Steamships, Liverpool, Eng.

**Special Notice.** This Certificate must be carefully preserved, and delivered to the  
AGENT OF THE ERIE RAILWAY COMPANY, immediately upon arrival in New  
York.  
Besondere Notiz. Dieser Schein muß sorgfältig aufbewahrt werden und  
gleich bei der Ankunft in New York dem Agent der Erie Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft  
überreicht werden.

*Several immigration aid committees were set up by Canadian and USA Mennonites in the 1870s to aid Mennonites emigrating from Russia to North America. This Mennonite Board of Guardians raised \$40,000 from 1873 to 1886. Of the emigrants, 11,000 emigrants settled in United States and 8,000 settled in Canada.*

Source: John F. Funk, Mennonite Board of Guardians, Collection

Compelling the Mennonite migration was a love of land. Indeed, the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870s expressed an almost obsessive interest in farmland. As immigrants, they debated its quality, and as farmers, they tested its potential. As neighbors, they treasured land if it was contiguous to the land of friends and relatives; as parents, they schemed for ways of acquiring more land. Their letters suggest they believed the immigrant community was successful if land, the foundation of a cohesive, agrarian community, was procured for each generation.<sup>1</sup> While Mennonites held no affinity to a particular land or country, historians agree that they firmly held to a “way of life that was rooted in the soil.”<sup>2</sup> Life on the farm had long protected Mennonite religious teachings against conformity to a wider world they equated with ostentation, avarice, vanity, and violence. Mennonite immigrants, therefore, saw land as a divine instrument. One Mennonite theologian, Waldemar Janzen, has described land as “a sacred plot by virtue not of any inherent sacredness, but of God’s choice of it as an instrument toward his purposes.”<sup>3</sup> But “instrument” and “purpose” were not always clearly distinguishable. Another Mennonite scholar, Calvin Redekop, for example, has argued that Dutch Mennonites linked the concept of religious community to agricultural land and even a geographic territory: “The family of God and its land were locked in holy matrimony.... Where the church was ... central in the search and negotiations for land, the Mennonite moral code [held]....”<sup>4</sup> Yet another scholar, Nancy-Lou Patterson, has drawn the same link for Swiss Mennonites: “the spiritual state of blessedness ... [the] enjoyment of the divine presence [was] embodied in this [rural] landscape of polity, order and stability, created and inhabited by Swiss-German Mennonite settlers....”<sup>5</sup>



This veneration of rural life was central to the culture of the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870s, and can be demonstrated by a comparison of Dutch-Russian migrants to their more established Swiss-Pennsylvania co-religionists, who had first come to North America in large numbers after 1710. In the late nineteenth century, significant differences marked the two main branches of Mennonites in North America: the Swiss and the Dutch.<sup>6</sup> By the 1890s, the Swiss were usually lodged in communities more than a century old and located in the densely populated eastern portions of North America—Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, and Ontario. The Dutch were just completing their first generation of sojourn in the midwestern sections of the continent's frontier—Kansas, Nebraska, and Manitoba. Despite these differences, the two groups of Mennonites shared a common culture. As Anthony Giddens has argued, the worlds of specific social groups must be seen in “social practices ordered across space and time,” and in the very processes in which “agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible.”<sup>7</sup> For the Mennonite immigrants and their descendants, the social practice of a life of simplicity, peace, self-sufficiency, and separation from worldly society, and the conditions that secured these “practices”—the farm household and agrarian community—were inseparable.



Historical marker at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kansas, recognizing the immigration of “peace-loving” Mennonites from Russia to Kansas, beginning in 1874. Photo by John E. Sharp



The Kolb homestead, Kitchener, Ont. Jacob and Katherine Clemens Kolb moved to Upper Canada from Bucks County, Pennsylvania about 1819. About 1829 they purchased this property along the Grand River at the “Breslau Ford.” And built a log house overlooking the river. This is now the location of Kolb Park in Kitchener.

Source: George L. and Elsie Bender Photograph Collection

## Two Peoples: One Identity

The lives of middle-aged farmers Cornelius Plett and David Bergey represented two distinctive faces of the Mennonite experience in rural Canada during the 1890s.<sup>8</sup> Plett was a Dutch-North German Mennonite immigrant, having made the voyage from Imperial Russia to Canada in 1875. He spoke West Prussian “Low German,” he lived in a wooden frame house attached to a barn by a common ridgepole, his wife wore a black kerchief, and his kinship network extended back to New Russia and into the American Midwest, especially Nebraska and Kansas.<sup>9</sup> Bergey was a Swiss Mennonite, a third-generation Canadian whose descendants had come north after the American Revolution. He spoke the South German dialect “Pennsylvanian Dutch”; his house was a stone construction detached from a massive, wooden, two-storeyed barn; his wife wore a white cap; his kinship network reached into the eastern United States.<sup>10</sup> Important, too, is the fact that the specific socioeconomic and physical settings in which Plett and Bergey lived were significantly different. Bergey was from Waterloo County in southern Ontario, while Plett lived in Manitoba’s Rural Municipality of Hanover, also known locally as the Mennonite East Reserve.

Bergey of Ontario and Plett of Manitoba shared similar, crucial “social practices.” On the surface, regional differences affected their

social behavior. Plett still lived in a homogeneous immigrant community, in a municipality almost commensurate with a land bloc set aside for the exclusive use of the Mennonites in 1873 (its exclusivity lifted only in the 1890s). The more highly urbanized setting of Waterloo increased the usage of English in the Bergey household, the level of interaction with the “outside” world, the Bergey children’s pursuit of higher education, and the household’s dependence on regional markets. Cutting through the regional differences, however, was a common dedication to the conditions that were seen as safeguarding Mennonite culture: the family-oriented farm household set in a closely knit, rural, sectarian community. This was the common link between Bergey of Waterloo and Plett of Hanover. Despite regional differences resulting in different descriptive cultural traits, Bergey and Plett shared similar social aims. Ultimately, their lives diverged only in that they sought to establish the self-sufficient agrarian household and sectarian community in two distinctly different settings.

The lives of Cornelius Plett in Hanover Municipality and David Bergey in Waterloo County during the 1890s were different. Plett and Bergey represented different generations of immigrants, they hailed from two different Mennonite groups, and they spoke different German dialects. They



also came from different regions. Plett's Manitoba was marked by an abundance of land and a wheat frontier, and Bergey's Ontario was characterized by urbanization, industrialization, and cultural pluralism. Thus, while the Manitoba Mennonites had a well-defined sense of social boundary, and recorded high rates of endogamy and linguistic retention, the Ontario Mennonites interacted almost daily with non-Mennonites, spoke more English, and more readily changed church allegiances.

Still, a common adherence to the established Mennonite values of a separated, simple lifestyle, rooted in land, the farm household, and agrarian community, characterized the majority of Mennonites in both the Hanover and the Waterloo settlements. Both communities undertook strategies to ensure the survival of this kind of ethnic and religious community. There were some behavioral differences that stemmed from the more intense shortage of land in Waterloo than in Hanover: the Waterloo youth waited longer before they married and formed their own households; Waterloo parents more actively sought new sources of land outside the original townships of settlement, and more often, too, they lived in multiple-family households.

Despite these differences, both Waterloo and Hanover Mennonites were prepared to "reproduce the conditions" required in their respective regions to maintain a rural, sectarian way of life. Both were committed to the generational succession of the farm household, even when it entailed secondary migrations to new settlements, or the creation of stem families. Both, too, practiced a particular system of inheritance, sanctioned a certain type of wealth stratification, and cultivated social networks that would maximize their chances of reproducing the agrarian

household and, hence, of maintaining their community's social boundaries.

In spite of the effects of regionalism, an inter-regional comparison of Mennonites suggests that common social practices sometimes took root despite the different restraints and opportunities of particular Canadian regions. In such a circumstance, the writing of a pan-Canadian experience of one group can be more than "an intellectual construct"; it can reflect a common, lived "reality." For Mennonites, that reality lay within the self-sufficient household and the sectarian community. That the Mennonites of Waterloo and Hanover sometimes followed different strategies in maintaining their communities is evidence of the restraints and opportunities of their respective regions; that these strategies were geared to a similar end is evidence of shared cultural values. A comparative analysis of third-generation Waterloo residents and first-generation Hanover residents suggests the degree to which Mennonites venerated an agrarian world. Common behavioral patterns across regions and generations illuminate a set of values that were not often given public expression.

From *Hidden Worlds: Revisiting the Mennonite Migrants of the 1870s* by Royden Loewen, pp. 69-72, 86-87. Used with permission. This book resulted from Loewen's Menno Simons lectures, given at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. in 1999.



Royden Loewen  
professor of history  
chair of Mennonite  
Studies at the University  
of Winnipeg, and  
president of the

Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

#### (Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> See, for example, Delbert Plett, ed and trans., "Letters from Nebraska," in *Pioneers and Pilgrims: The Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde*

in *Manitoba, Nebraska and Kansas, 1874-1882* (Steinbach, MB: DFP Publications, 1990): 77-94.

<sup>2</sup> Frank H. Epp, *Mennonites in Canada: A People's Struggle for Survival, 1920-1940* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 187.

<sup>3</sup> Waldemar Janzen, "Geography of Faith," in *Still in the Image: Essays in Biblical Theology and Anthropology* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1982), 148.

<sup>4</sup> Calvin Redekop, "The Mennonite Romance with Land," in *Visions and Realities*, ed. Harry Loewen and Al Reimer (Winnipeg: Hyperion, 1985), 89.

<sup>5</sup> Nancy-Lou Patterson, "Landscape and Meaning: Structure and Symbolism of the Swiss-German Mennonite Farmstead of Waterloo Region, Ontario," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 16 (1984): 50.

<sup>6</sup> For a useful exposition of this difference, see James Juhnke, "Patterns of Mennonite Peoplehood Around 1890," in *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989). He contrasts the Swiss Mennonites' emphasis on humility and quiescence to the Dutch Mennonites' interest in organization and material culture; he also describes the Dutch Mennonites, liberating experience on the frontier where they met many non-Mennonites and were introduced to concepts of denominationalism; Swiss Mennonites, by contrast, cultivated a moderate conservatism.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2.

<sup>8</sup> For standard accounts of the history of Canadian Mennonites during these years, see Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920: The History of a Separate People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974). For sociological analyses of these communities, see J. Winfield Fretz, *The Waterloo Mennonites: A Community in Paradox* (Waterloo, ON, 1989); Francis, *In Search of Utopia*.

<sup>9</sup> Cornelius Plett, diary, 1895, trans. Delbert Plett, Steinbach Bible College [hereafter SBC], Steinbach, MB; Delbert Plett, *Plett Picture Book* (Steinbach, MB, 1982), 53-60; Rosabel Fast, "A History of the Plett Family" (unpublished research paper, University of Manitoba, 1978), 4.

<sup>10</sup> David Bergey, diary, 1866, 1881, 1900-01, 1909, 1911, MAO [Mennonite Archives of Ontario]; Lorna Bergey, "Bergey Family and Farm History" (Waterloo, 1966); interview with Lorna Bergey, Waterloo, ON, November, 1990.

#### ... Amish Voyage endnotes cont. from pg. 8

on the *Charming Nancy*. This has not been substantiated.

<sup>9</sup> Gottlieb Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750 and Return to Germany in 1754* (Tr. Carl T. Eben, Philadelphia, 1898). p. 23

<sup>10</sup> Though a number of Mennonites came to America this way, cases involving the Amish have not been found. Perhaps they were better off financially and did not have to resort to this measure or their efforts were funded by a program of mutual aid.

<sup>11</sup> See Melvin Gingerich, "Mennonite Indentured Servants," *The Mennonite* (July 1961), pp. 107-109.





*The Grossmünster in Zurich, center of Reformed and Anabaptist reform will be the site of the Reformed Church "Acknowledgement" conference, June 26, 2004.*

# Reformed Church of Zurich Invites Anabaptist Descendants to a ceremony of Acknowledgement

by Kendra King

An official ceremony of reconciliation between leaders of the Reformed Church in Zurich and Anabaptist descendants from around the world will take place in Zurich, Switzerland this summer.

For six months beginning in March, the Evangelical-Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich will commemorate the 500th anniversary of Heinrich Bullinger, one of the fathers of the Reformed Church. On June 26, they will also honor Felix Manz, a founder of the Anabaptist movement, in a special ceremony. As a part of this ceremony, a memorial to Manz will be unveiled and placed on the bank of the Limmat River, where Manz was drowned in 1527 for his Anabaptist convictions.

Recently, officials of the Reformed Church in Zurich have expressed a desire to acknowledge their "shadow side," including 16th- and 17th-century persecution and execution of Anabaptists.



"The Reformation started as a movement of renewal but immediately turned out to become a story of separations," said Peter Dettwiler, ecumenical officer of the Evangelical-Reformed Church in Zurich. "It's time to set a memorial in the city of Zurich where the roots of both the Reformed and the Anabaptists are to be found."

The Reformed Church has invited 100 North American representatives to join in this ceremony of past acknowledgement and future hope. These individuals are to include Amish and Hutterites, as well as other spiritual descendants of Anabaptists. In addition, Larry Miller of Mennonite World Conference is coordinating the broader participation by the world-wide Mennonite and Brethren in Christ community. Swiss Mennonites are playing an important role in the planning.

John Sharp, director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives, is coordinating North American participation in this commemoration. Sharp became involved in planning this event quite by chance last June. Through a relative, John Zook, an airline pilot who frequently flies to Switzerland, Sharp's name was given to Elisabeth Lutz, a friend in Zurich. Both Lutz and Zook were involved in negotiating the approval and placement of the Manz marker. Sharp traveled to Zurich to participate in the discussions, and also met with officials of the Evangelical Reformed Church for conversation on the proposed conference.

While this will be a historic commemoration, it is not an isolated event, Sharp said. Other similar discussions have taken place in the past. In 1983, MWC participated in a discussion with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, followed by a public service of confession for injustice during the Reformation.


This dialogue resumed again in 1984 and 1989. Swiss Mennonites and state church representatives have engaged in various steps toward understanding and reconciliation in the last 20 years. More recently, in 2002, some Mennonites, Amish and members of the Reformed Church gathered informally to engage in discussion and acknowledgement of past wrongs.

"All of these conversations seem to be part of an emerging ecumenical impulse toward reconciliation," Sharp said. "The challenge is to engage in serious discussions of core commitments, so that reconciliation ceremonies like this one have integrity."

So what makes this event special? This will be the largest gathering of officials and members of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich and Anabaptist descendants, Sharp said.

"The setting for this conference—the great cathedral, where the dramatic actions that birthed the Anabaptist movement took place—adds to its historic nature," Sharp said. "In Zurich, participants will have an opportunity to engage in conversations of hope with two once-adversarial traditions."

In addition, the memorial to Manz will be unveiled on the bank of the Limmat River at the place of his execution.

"It will be a great honor and a joy to have direct descendants of the Anabaptists with us," Dettwiler said. "We hope this event can become a new beginning of ecumenical relations among our churches and congregations." 

*Kendra King is communications intern for Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Communications.*

## More Than Distant Memories

*Migrations and immigrant stories are not just distant memories, they are current realities. The countries of origin have changed, but the journeys continue. Here are short contemporary accounts of two immigrants whose homelands were in Central America and Asia.*


### Rosa's Journey from Nicaragua

Rosa is from Nicaragua. She made the trip to the U.S. ten years ago with her daughter and three-year-old grandson. Together they traveled by land through Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. When they arrived they went to a refugee home, where they stayed while they applied for asylum. When Rosa lived in Nicaragua, she says, she was persecuted by the Sandanistas because she was Somozista.

They acquired papers to go to Miami, but the paperwork on her asylum case was going nowhere. "She applied for asylum and it was never decided in her case," says Brad Ginter, immigrant advocate. "Her file was just put on somebody's desk somewhere, and sat for the nine or ten years that she has been in this country."

Meanwhile Rosa had been actively trying to build a new life for herself and her family. For eight years she has sold flowers on the street to make her living. She has learned enough English to engage in her business. "I have always worked. I have never received, nor do I want, any government aid," she says.

Now her asylum case has been through a number of rounds in the legal system. She applied for a suspension of deportation, which was thrown out. Then a federal judge ruled that she qualified for it under the standards that were in effect at the time the case was filed.

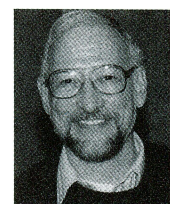
After 10 years of uncertainty, Rosa has a sense of hope for her future here. "I am happy because I can now apply to become a permanent resident of this country." 

*Third Way Café Web Site* (<http://www.thirdway.com/BTN/immigration/sto7.asp>)  
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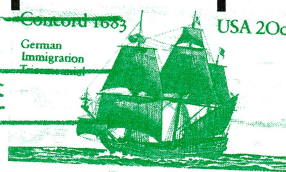


# Scrapbook page, Goshen

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



Above: This drawing appears on the cover of a scrapbook given to Mennonites in United States who aided Russian Mennonites in escaping Soviet Union in 1929. It is signed by "The Refugee Camps Moellin, Hammerstein, and Prezlau [Germany], in the Winter of 1929-30." Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection

Above, left: Several Quaker and one Mennonite family, Jan Lensen, emigrated from Krefeld, Germany, and sailed on the *Concord*, arriving in Philadelphia on October 6, 1683. They settled at Germantown, the first ongoing Mennonite settlement in the U.S. The stamp was issued April 29, 1983 to commemorate this immigration. In 1983 German Americans made up largest ethnic group in U.S. (52 million), followed by the Irish (44 million) and the British (40 million). Mennonite Publishing House Collection

Passport stamps (below) dated July 15, 1825, allowing Friedrich Hage (1794-1863),



from Bavaria, to travel in Germany. He was an Amish Mennonite minister, who with his wife, two children, and a hired hand, emigrated to USA and landed in Philadelphia on August 18, 1826. Hage served the Amish community in Holmes County, Ohio. Friedrich Hage Collection



Above: Jacob Hertzler (1703-1786) and Catherine Reugy emigrated from Bern, Switzerland, by way of the Palatinate, to Berks County, Pennsylvania, USA in 1749. They settled on a 100-acre farm two miles west of Hamburg, which they named "Contentment". Hertzler served the Northkill Amish congregation, and later the congregation at Malvern, as minister and bishop. He and his wife and a son are buried in the Northkill Amish cemetery on this farm. John E. Sharp Photograph

Below: Seventy-year-old Helene Thiessen is boarding the ship, *General Stuart Heintzelman*, leaving, from Bremerhaven, Germany on February 25, 1948. Buenos Aires, Argentina was the destination. The majority were women; many of the men "disappeared" during the Stalin purges from 1937-41. Source: Mennonite Central Committee Photograph Collection





# Scrapbook page, North Newton

Immigration is not just a phenomenon of the distant past for Mennonites. This photo from about 1991 shows the Engh-Ho Taiwanese Mennonite fellowship in Topeka, Kansas. The group met from about 1989 to the mid-1990s. (from folder 86. MCA.II.3.a.1.e, Western District conference minister files).



by John D. Thiesen,  
Archivist

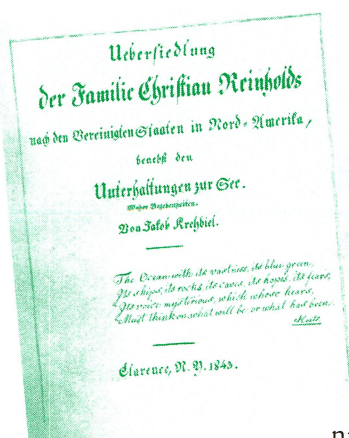
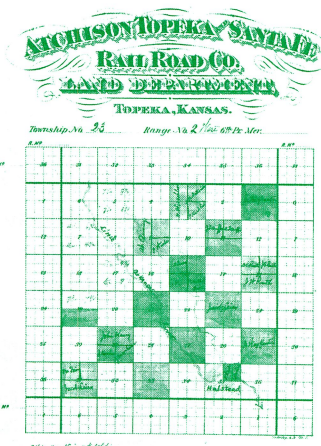


Below: Map showing land selections from the Santa Fe railroad made by 1870s immigrants to the Halstead, Kansas, area, including both immigrants from Russia (Bernhard Warkentin, Abraham Quiring) and from South Germany via Illinois (Krehbiel, Haury, Leisy). Map is dated Nov. 1, 1875. (SA.II.964)



At least twice in the 1870s, a national weekly newspaper, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, published articles and illustrations about Mennonite immigrants from Russia. The images from the 1875 article

have become the classic visual symbols of the 1870s Mennonite immigration into the United States. This image, however, comes from a less well-known article of September 6, 1873. The caption of the original reads "New York City—Arrival of Mennonite Emigrants, a Religious Sect Expelled from Russia and Seeking a Refuge in Dakota, America—a Scene on a Hamburg Steamer on the Hudson River."



Title page of a book written in 1843 by Jakob Krehbiel of Clarence Center, New York. The title translated is *Migration of the Christian Reinhold Family to the United States of North America, including Conversations about the Ocean: True Occurrences.*

This is a work that we might now call historical fiction or creative non-fiction, a compilation of migration experiences of various persons brought together in one narrative about a fictional family. The

132-page book follows the usual conventions of book printing—even including footnotes—but is entirely handwritten. Krehbiel was born October 11, 1780 at the Pfrimmerhof in what is today southwestern Germany; married Maria Gramm; migrated to Clarence Center, New York, in 1831; and died there April 1860. He became elder/bishop of the Clarence Center church in 1839. (SA.II.1248)



Beginning in 1951 the General Conference had a home missions activity with a multi-racial community of migrant workers near Eloy, Arizona. A congregation called Friendly Corners Chapel continued until disbanding in 1980. In this photo from about 1962, Glen Habegger teaches a group of migrant workers' children.





## Strangers and Pilgrims

Mennonites and Amish have often been a pilgrim people with intermittent sojourns on various continents, places we have called home. From the pulpit of the Locust Grove (Conservative Conference) Church in the Kishacoquillas Valley of central Pennsylvania, frequent use of such terms as “strangers and pilgrims” and “a peculiar people,” reinforced our self-perception as a people with no “continuing city” here on earth. In my father’s daily prayer, he thanked God that we could live and worship in a country “unmolested and undisturbed”—a reminder of an earlier era when we lived in less hospitable homelands.

But our selective memories do not always register the experience of African Americans who found this country to be a hostile land of bondage. Nor do we always choose to remember the experience of Native Americans, who were dispossessed of the very land which afforded opportunity and wealth for European Americans. Neither of these groups experienced the “spiritual state of blessedness” in the “landscape of polity, order and stability” which characterized Swiss-German Mennonite immigrants, described in Loewen’s article.



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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee  
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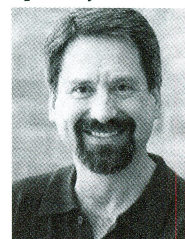
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For Rosa, a Nicaraguan immigrant, the identity as pilgrims and strangers is a clear and present reality, as her story illustrates. Asia and Central America have replaced Europe as the “old country,” where its citizens are now “molested and disturbed.”

In biblical history, Israel’s motivation for worshipping God and welcoming the stranger was the memory of their own experience of slavery and of God’s dramatic rescue.

Our collective memory—biblical and historical—along with recent U. S. immigration restrictions, has led Mennonite Church USA to write and adopt a statement on immigration. The statement reflects another historic core commitment—compassion which calls us to bear one another’s burdens: *We reject our country’s mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence, and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status.*

—John E. Sharp, editor



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# Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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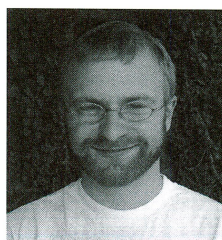


## In this issue

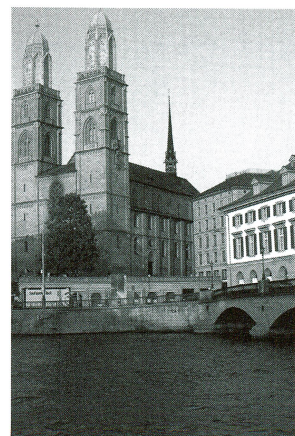


**Page 2:** John Sharp reviews the work of the Historical Committees begun in 1911. Both the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church appointed Historical Committees in the same year. In a companion article, p. 6, Dennis Stoesz reviews the collecting and publishing of historical books.

... to serve  
Mennonite  
Church USA  
in "preserving  
our faith heritage,  
interpreting our  
stories,  
and proclaiming  
God's work  
among us."



**Page 9:** Reuben Miller reports the dedication of a historical marker, *The Anabaptist Stone*, near Schleithem. Schleithem is the place where the *Brotherly Union* of 1527 was endorsed by Swiss and South German Anabaptists, presumably under the leadership of Michael Sattler.



**The Back Page:** Editor John Sharp reflects on the "remarkable and memorable" Reformed-Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference in Zurich, June 26, 2004. Symbolizing the statements of acknowledgment and regret, the Zurich church and the council placed a memorial marker by the Limmat River where Felix Manz and Hans Landis were executed. Look for more in the October issue.

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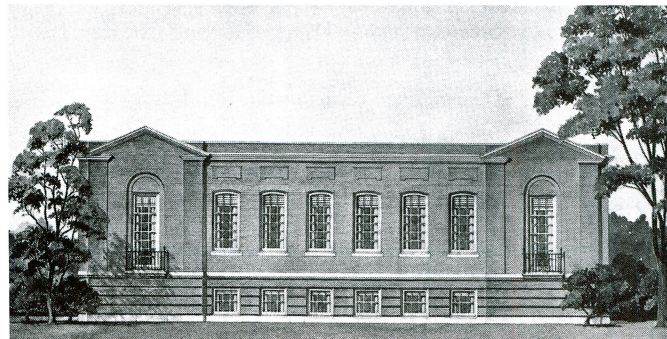


by John E. Sharp

(Photo above) *The General Conference, in 1964, officially designated the archives at Bethel College the official denominational archival repository. The North Newton archives under the Historical Committee's administration is housed with the historical library, which operated by Bethel College.* Credit: John E. Sharp

(Photo right) *The archives were first housed in the new Memorial Library built at Goshen College in 1940, seen here in a proposed sketch. The library was named in recognition of the former witnesses of the Mennonite Church and their devoted service to the cause of Christ. Today this building serves as the Visual Arts Building for the college.* Source: Goshen College Archives Collection

“We learn from the past, as we prepare for the future. We cannot see God’s direction for tomorrow without the indicators of God’s providence in the past.” This quotation from Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, expresses the church’s historic commitment to its corporate memory. Both the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church founded historical committees in the same year, 1911—93 years ago. GCs founded a Mennonite Historical Association at their triennial session in Bluffton, Ohio. C. H. Wedel, who died just the year before, had inspired its formation. H. R. Voth, former missionary to the Hopi in Arizona (and collector of Indian artifacts for the Smithsonian), and H. P. Krehbiel, publisher of Herald Publishing Company in Newton, were the most active proponents of the new historical work.<sup>1</sup>



MC delegates, meeting in biennial session near Johnstown, Pa., appointed a committee of “ten brethren” to produce “an authentic Church History.”<sup>2</sup> Had no history of Mennonites been written? Indeed,



C. H. Wedel, first president of Bethel College in North Newton, Kans., had written a four-volume, German-language *Summary of the history of the Mennonites*, published 1900-1904. C. Henry Smith's prolific pen produced *The Mennonites of America* in 1909. Though James Juhnke has described Smith's work as "the first thoroughly Americanized study of Anabaptist-Mennonite history," MCs called for an "authentic" history as a "handbook for ordinary use rather than a reference book for library use."<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, MCs wanted a more sectarian treatment of history, in addition to Smith's inter-Mennonite overview. Thirty-one years later, in 1942, Scottdale published John Horsch's *Mennonites in Europe*. Harold Bender was to write the companion volume, *Mennonites in America*, but Bender died before the book was completed. Instead, Bender's colleague, J. C. Wenger, wrote *The Mennonite Church in America* 20 years later, in 1966. Wenger used Bender's introduction written in 1947(!), and credited Bender for four of the 14 chapters.

Bender, who introduced the second volume, noted Smith's "excellent book" which covered all Mennonite groups, but made a case for a history of the "Mennonite Church" which "has been channeled deeply into its own traditions and organizations ... separated somewhat from the remaining Mennonite bodies."<sup>4</sup>

While the GC committee began collecting historical treasures of all kinds, the MCs collected mainly books, which they housed at Scottdale. The Mennonite Publishing House subsidized the library, and John Horsch became its custodian. When the committee acquired Elkhart publisher John F. Funk's extensive library, they pronounced their collection "the most valuable library on Mennonite history in America." It is not likely that the MC

committee compared their library with the GC collection, housed at Krehbiel's Herald Publishing House in Newton. The GC committee became less active when H. R. Voth died in 1931. Activity on the MC side picked up when, by 1931, Harold Bender replaced his father-in-law, John Horsch, as the leader of the committee's work. Consequently Goshen replaced Scottdale as the hub of historical activity. Reporting to the 1933 MC general assembly, gathered in Hesston, Kans., just seven miles from Newton, Bender articulated the committee's hope for a "central building" to house "a historical library, museum archives building, and possible a meeting place for boards and committees."<sup>5</sup>

Too many records were being discarded. Alice Kauffman Gingerich told the story of her father, Daniel Kauffman, foremost MC leader in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, burning letters in the fire built to heat the "wash water" because, "No one should ever read these letters."<sup>6</sup> Dennis Stoesz, Goshen archivist, has often lamented that before 1950 too little was saved; after 1950 too much has been saved. The preservation efforts of the committee were rewarded—and exceeded!

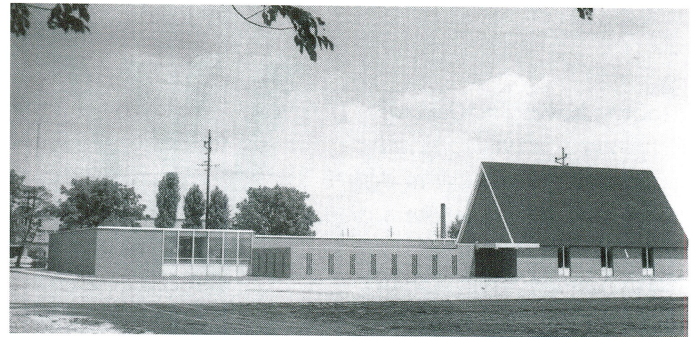
In 1939 the MC general assembly authorized the establishment of an archives to preserve the records of the church, with the Historical Committee serving as custodian. S. F. Coffman, who served as chairman for 37 years (1911-1947) reported that the Historical Committee would raise \$5,000 for the use of two rooms in the basement of the new Goshen College Memorial Library to be built the following year.<sup>7</sup>

Abraham Warkentin, a 1920s refugee from Russia, became professor of

German at Bethel College and pastor at First Mennonite Church of Newton. His interest in the work of historical preservation influenced the relocation of some of the GC collections to Bethel College in 1939, where they are presently located. When Warkentin went to Chicago to become the first president of the GC seminary, he took part of the collection with him, which North Newton archivist, John D. Thiesen has called "an egregious violation" of current archival practices.<sup>8</sup>

In April 1940 MCs published the first issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*. Editor J. C. Wenger said the purpose of the magazine was to inform readers of historical study, publish articles, review current publications, answer questions about "congregational, church and family history," and serve as a channel for "historical workers." The mailing list targeted pastors and "prospective supporters."<sup>9</sup>

In 1944 the GCs gained their "most well-known promoter" when Russian refugee Cornelius Krahn arrived at



*The archives were moved in 1959 from Memorial Library to the seminary building, now Newcomer Center (shown above), on the south end of the campus. The archives were located in the southwest wing of the building—shown on the photograph by the six windows and the stack area on the left. Today the archives have taken over the entire west end of the building, occupying about 4,000 square feet. Additional materials occupy another 1,500 square feet on the second floor of Westlawn.* Source: Historical Committee Collection



Melvin Gingerich (right), served as executive secretary and archivist for the committee 1957-70. Earlier he had been worked for the Mennonite Research Foundation, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Encyclopedia, and Goshen College, 1947-57.

Source: Historical Committee Collection



Bethel College. Krahn had completed a dissertation on the life of Menno Simons at the University of Heidelberg. He developed the GC historical collection into a major library rich in Dutch, Prussian, and Russian Mennonite materials. In addition to his numerous publications, he founded *Mennonite Life* in 1946 and was an assistant editor of the four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

The monumental *Mennonite Encyclopedia* was the first inter-Mennonite publishing venture, a harbinger of things to come. Mennonite Brethren joined MCs and GCs in producing the reference work, released from 1955 to 1959. Krahn, Harold Bender, Orlando Harms, and Melvin Gingerich were the editors. The historical committees and the archives of both MCs and GCs were reorganized at various times. In 1959 the Goshen archives relocated to the newly built Goshen Biblical Seminary building. The office was named in honor of its first and long-time chairman, S. F. Coffman. The General Conference, in 1964, officially designated the archives at Bethel College the official denominational archival repository. John F. Schmidt complemented Krahn by becoming the “internal face” of the archives, organizing collections and serving researchers.

While Cornelius Krahn was still director of the Mennonite Library and Archives at North Newton, Leonard Gross, in 1970, replaced Melvin Gingerich as

director of the MC historical committee and the archives. Gross, who retired in 1997 brought a particular focus on faith as history and Christianity. “Through the centuries we who stand in the Anabaptist tradition have understood the essence of Christianity as faith and history,” said Gross. “Our faith resides in the living Jesus of history and Christ of faith whom we follow as disciples, and indeed whom we actually become—as individual ‘Christs’ endeavoring to live out his gospel of peace, within his spiritual Body and kingdom of love.”

John Thiesen became the new face at North Newton, beginning as a student in the late 1970s. He has since become archivist and co-director of libraries. Dennis Stoesz came to Goshen in 1989 and serves as archivist and operations manager. Most assuredly, no one knows the treasures of these archives as well as Thiesen and Stoesz. They have plumbed their depths while organizing hundreds of collections and serving thousands of researchers.

Levi Miller of Scottsdale, Pa. was hired as Goshen’s director in 1990 and served until 1994. He implemented the MC Historical Committee’s *New Directions*, which strengthened the focus of the committee’s work “to transmit church history and heritage to the church at the grassroots level”. This included “networking and communicating” activities with the regional archives, congregations, conferences, and new members of the church.

Both historical groups have published books and articles, sponsored workshops and conferences, and told the essential stories of the church countless times in order to “promote heritage understanding and identity throughout the church.”

In 1995 John Sharp became the MC director and was appointed in 2001 to serve in that capacity for the newly formed Mennonite Church USA. His focus on nurturing the corporate memory through storytelling is illustrated by his Herald Press publication, *Gathering at the Hearth, Stories Mennonites Tell*. Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA, commented on the importance of the Historical Committee: “As we understand where God has led us in the past, we can be prepared for where God will lead us in the future. The Historical Committee maintains our historical records and interprets them for the generations to come.”

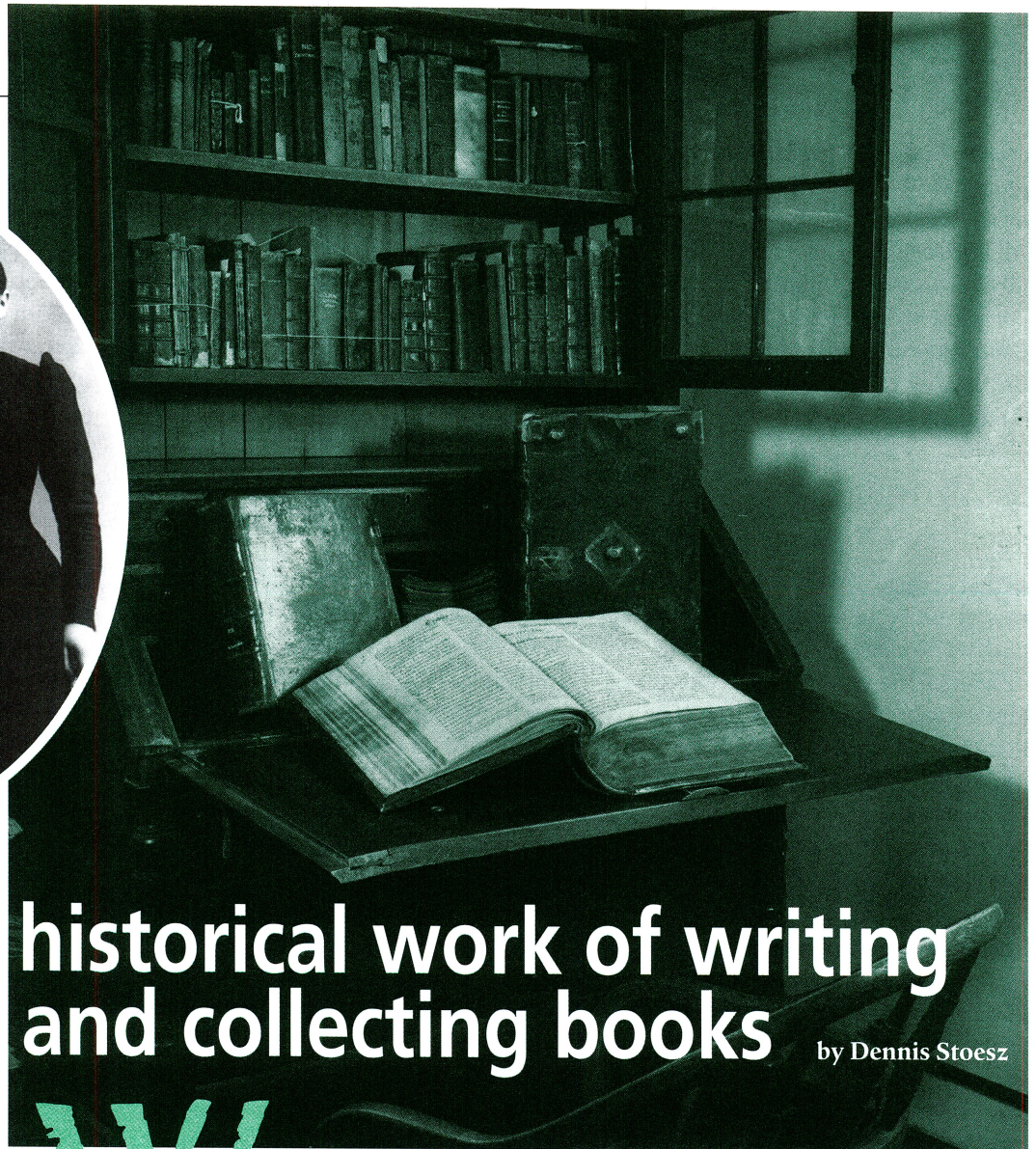
Since 2001 the archives at North Newton has been under the Historical Committee’s administration, while the library remains with Bethel College. This change mirrors the structure at Goshen, where the Mennonite Historical Library is under the administration of Goshen College, apart from the archives.

The North Newton staff includes James Lynch, archives assistant since 2000. At Goshen, Ruth Schrock began as a volunteer in 1992 and is now archives assistant and office manager. Cathy Hochstetler joined the staff as archives assistant in 2001. Volunteers and students round out the staff at both locations.

The mission of the Historical Committee and the two archives is to serve Mennonite Church USA in “preserving our faith heritage, interpreting our stories, and proclaiming God’s work among us.”

**Endnotes on page 13 ...**





# The historical work of writing and collecting books

by Dennis Stoesz

## Writing Books

In 1911, the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference (1898-1971) appointed a committee to produce “an authentic church history.” Members of this committee were S. F. Coffman, J. S. Hartzler, C. Z. Yoder, I. J. Heatwole, I. J. Miller, J. B. Smith, John Horsch, C. H. Smith, A. D. Martin, and Joseph R. Ruth. These books were published in 1942 (John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe*) and in 1966 (J. C. Wenger, *The Mennonite Church in America*). The committee has also encouraged the writing of other books by such authors as Elaine Sommers Rich, Rafael Falcon, and LeRoy Bechler.

Photos: (left) John Horsch (1867-1941) and Christine Funck Horsch (1870-1966)

(Right) This S. D. Guengerich book collection, desk, and 1531 Froschauer Bible were part of Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, already in 1948. This photograph was taken in the basement of the Memorial Library, which served as Goshen College’s library 1940-1967.

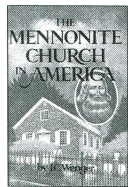
Source: Mennonite Historical Library Photograph Collection

In the introduction to *The Mennonite Church in America*, Harold S. Bender surveys books that have been written on the Mennonites in America from 1841 to 1945: 1841 (Benjamin Eby, in German), 1844 (Christian Herr), 1878 (John F. Funk), 1888 and 1890 (Daniel K. Cassell, in German), 1895 (C. H. A. van der Smitten, in German), 1898 (Johannes Bartsch, in German), 1904 (C. H. Wedel, in German), 1905 (J. S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman), 1909 (C. Henry Smith), 1920 (C. Henry Smith), 1940 (J. C. Wenger), 1941 (C. Henry Smith) and 1945 (C. Henry Smith, revised edition).

Interestingly, Bender does not mention the two volume history produced by H. P. Krehbiel on *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America*, published in 1898 (Volume I) and 1938 (Volume II). It took until the 1980s for the various Mennonite groups to cooperate and produce the four-volume



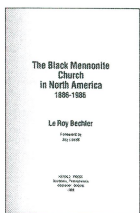
set, *Mennonite Experience in America, 1683-1970* (Richard K. MacMaster, Theron F. Schlabach, James C. Juhnke, and Paul Toews), published between 1985 and 1996. And today we turn to the recently published Global History series of Mennonites around the world, since Mennonites in North America make up only 37 percent of world membership (443,918 of 1,203,995 as of 2000).



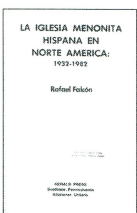
Fifty-five years after it was commissioned, J. C. Wenger's book on *The Mennonite Church in America* was published by Herald Press in 1966. Four of the chapters were written by Harold S. Bender. The dust jacket, designed by Jan Gleysteen, features Germantown Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, Pa., and early leader Hans Herr. In the introduction, Bender indicates that this history book features the story of the (Old) Mennonite Church.



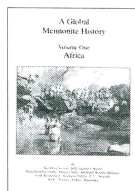
This book was presented to readers in 1983 in celebration of the 300-year history of Mennonite women in North America, whose tradition came to be organized under the Women's Missionary and Service Commission (1915-1997) of the (Old) Mennonite Church. Clara (Hooley) Hershberger, Goshen, Ind., is featured on the cover. The story of Ontario women is told by Lorraine Roth, *Willing Service* (1992). The story of other faith streams are told by Mary Lou Cummings, *Full Circle: Stories of Mennonite Women* (1978); Gladys Goering, *Women in Search of Mission: A History of the General Conference Mennonite Women's Organization* (1980); and Katie Funk Wiebe, *Women Among the [Mennonite] Brethren* (1979).



"To give a people their history is to give them a future," writes Joy Lovett, associate secretary for the African American Mennonite Association, in the foreword of this 100-year history. The beginnings were in North Carolina in 1886 with the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church. One chapter is devoted to the leadership of James and Rowena Lark from the 1930s to the 1970s.



Lawndale was the first Hispanic Mennonite church, founded in Chicago in 1932 as a result of mission efforts. In the period 1970-75 the membership and number of congregations doubled, and doubled again 1975-81. Falcon concluded that when he wrote the book (1985) Hispanics made up the most rapidly growing minority group in North America, and that this phenomenal growth was due, in part, to the large mass immigrations. A translation of this book into English by Ron Collins was published in 1986: *The Hispanic Mennonite Church in North America, 1932-1982*.



The cover of the first volume of the Global History Book series features a Brethren in Christ baptism in the Ginka river in Zimbabwe. In 2003 the African Mennonite membership stood at 451,341, surpassing Mennonite membership in North America.

This volume features many writers; chapters treat Central Africa, Brethren in Christ, Eastern Africa, and Western Africa. French and Spanish language editions are being prepared; future volumes in this series will feature Asia, Latin America, Europe, and North America.

## Collecting Books

At the 1913 Mennonite General Conference, the Historical Committee received permission to buy books on church history. The library was located at the Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale, and John Horsch was the custodian of the library. Horsch also served as secretary-treasurer of the committee. By 1923, the library consisted of 200 titles, and a *Catalogue* of the library was published in 1929. Under the leadership of Harold S. Bender, these books were transferred to the Mennonite Historical Library in the new Memorial Library at Goshen College in 1940.



*The reading room of the Mennonite Historical Library when it was located in the basement of the Memorial Library about 1953. The curator, Nelson Springer, can be seen standing in the center of the photograph.* Source: Mennonite Historical Library Photograph Collection.

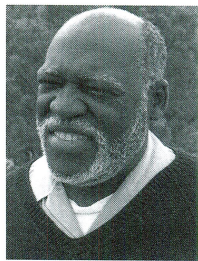


*The John Horsch Room as it looked in 1967 as part of Mennonite Historical Library, third floor of Good Library, Goshen College. It continues to be popular meeting place.*

Source: Mennonite Historical Library Photograph Collection



## MC USA Historical Committee members



**Lee Roy Berry, Jr.**, is an attorney at Berry and Parsons in Goshen, Ind. He also teaches history and political science part-time at Goshen College. His early schooling was primarily in Florida. He is a graduate of Eastern Mennonite College and has a Ph.D. in government and international studies from the University of Notre Dame and a J.D. from Indiana University.

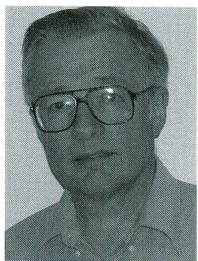
Lee Roy lives in Goshen Ind., with his wife Beth, where they are members of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship. They have three grown children.

**Beth Graybill** is the outgoing director of MCC U.S. Women's Concerns. She is completing her dissertation on Amish women through the University of Maryland. She and her husband and young son are members of Community Mennonite Church of Lancaster.



**Raylene Hinz-Penner**, after a long tenure as an English professor and in advancement work at Bethel College, now lives in Topeka, Kans., where she teaches in the English department at Washburn University. Her interests are in humanities and local history, contemporary American literature, and creative writing; she is a

practicing poet and presenter of poetry. Her current writing project is telling the story of Lawrence Hart, Cheyenne peace chief and Mennonite minister. She is a member of the Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka and a wider fellowship member of the Bethel College Mennonite Church. She is married to Doug Penner.



**Jim Juhnke** taught American history and Mennonite history at Bethel College (Kansas) from 1967 to 2002. He wrote a number of books on Mennonite denominational history. His most recent book (with Carol Hunter) is *The Missing Peace: The Search for Alternatives to Violence in United States History* (2nd ed., 2004).

With his wife, Anna Kreider, Jim served in overseas church assignments in Botswana and the Peoples Republic of China. He is currently at work on a history of Kansas Mennonite political ideas and behavior from World War II to the present. He is on the deacon board of the Bethel College Mennonite Church.



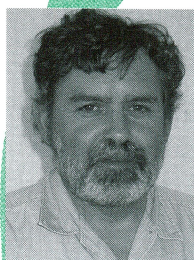
*Members of the Historical Committee are responsible for the operation of the archives and for heritage programs. They are accountable to the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA.*

**Susan Fisher Miller** grew up in Goshen, Ind., with a year of high school in Ireland. She majored in French and English at Goshen College, graduating in 1980, and received a Ph.D. in English from Northwestern University in 1986. Her doctoral dissertation treats poetry by W. B. Yeats. College teaching assignments

have included Goshen College, North Park University, and Wheaton College, where she is currently employed in the English department. She wrote *Culture for Service*, a scholarly history of Goshen College, to mark Goshen's centennial in 1994.

Susan resided with her husband, Lee Miller, and three sons in Evanston, Ill., and are grateful for their community at Evanston Mennonite Church.

**Kimberly D. Schmidt** is associate professor of history and director of the Washington Community Scholars' Center of Eastern Mennonite University, where she teaches local multi-cultural and women's history and pursues her research interests in Amish and Mennonite women's history. She received her Ph.D. in American history from Binghamton University in 1995. Publications include numerous articles and essays and *Strangers At Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History* from the Johns Hopkins University Press. She has lived in the Washington, D.C., area since 1989 and is married with two children.



**Frank Yoder** is an academic adviser at the University of Iowa and works on projects related to students making the transition from high school to the university. He also teaches courses in the history department. For his first eight years of education, he attended Snake Hollow, a one-room country school. After several initial feeble attempts at college, he earned a B.A. in history and religion from the University of Iowa and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago.

Frank lives near Kalona, Iowa, with his wife, Jane. They are the parents of two young adult children, and are members of Kalona Mennonite Church.





## Swiss place stone near Schleithelm: Täuferstein a symbol of reconciliation

by Reuben Miller

In the hills between Schleithelm and Hemmental in the canton of Schaffhausen, Switzerland, there is a stone marker that pays tribute to the Anabaptists who met there almost five hundred years ago. The *Täuferstein*, or “Anabaptist-Stone,” was placed there in early 2004, and an official dedication ceremony was celebrated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March. I was fortunate to be there in a contingent of Mennonites from the Kraichgau region of Germany, between the Rhein and the Neckar Rivers. The Kraichgau is where many Swiss Anabaptists found refuge in the decades after the Thirty Years War.

For Americans, it is all just *Europe*—but to Europeans each region has a story, a people and relationships to other regions. In the Kraichgau, you orient yourself by the Rhine: left [of the] Rhine, or right [of the] Rhine, east or west of the river. In the Schaffhausen canton of Switzerland, they determine their location according to the Rhine as well, but to the north and to the south. Schleithelm is north of the Rhine, on the border between Germany and Switzerland.

The village of Schleithelm is quiet, clean and conservative. The houses stand with the certainty of centuries and the streets meander between them, on a Saturday empty of the weekday traffic. We met our hosts, a friendly Swiss couple with three children. As it is with Europeans, the language of discourse must be established at the beginning of a visit. “Do you understand *Schweizerdeutsch*?” our hosts inquired. “Limited,” one of my companions replied. “Okay, then we will try to remember to

*Photo: Three hundred gathered at Schleithelm by the “Path of the Anabaptists” to dedicate a memorial to the Anabaptists. The placing of a stone was a high point for those involved in the movement to foster historical accountability.*

Photo by Wolfgang Krauss



speak High German.” While the Swiss use standard German as an official language in addition to French and Italian, Swiss German is the language of everyday life. Our hosts were not Mennonites, and in fact there are no Mennonites in Schleithem. The last Anabaptists left Schaffhausen in 1680 after 150 years of persecution. Under the leadership of Michael Sattler in 1527, a group of peasants came together to create a statement of group cohesion and ethical clarification. Already anxious in a time of social upheaval and significant armed conflict, the local authorities would have been alarmed by the meeting and the ensuing document. The *Wiedertäufer* or *Täufer* were committing illegal acts. Their refusal to obey laws that were contradictory to their conscience put them in conflict with the authorities at Schaffhausen, the local seat of regional power.

Some of today’s villagers in Schleithem may be surprised that most Mennonites have heard the name of their hometown. Yet for Mennonites on continents far away from Europe, the Schleithem Confession (1527) represents one of the first documents of the forebears of the Swiss-German Mennonites. But there is a movement today that aims to recognize the Anabaptists and their plight five-hundred years before. The *Täuferstein* memorial symbolizes the historical accountability and reconciliation that is afoot among Christians in the Swiss state churches. Saturday evening as we walked through the village at dusk, our

footsteps echoed on the facades of the buildings on the main street. One could very well imagine the *Täufer* slipping out of their homes, on their way to a meeting. We were given a special tour of the village museum, giving special attention to the *Täuferraum*, a planned permanent exhibit about the history of the Anabaptists in Schleithem.

We arrived the next day at the *Täuferstieg* path to participate in a ceremony at the stone on the “Path of the Anabaptists.” A crowd of 300 gathered at the site, along with a Salvation Army brass quartet. Sabine Aschmann, a pastor of the Reformed Church in Thayngen, addressed the group. She is one of the leaders in the movement for historical accountability and reconciliation. “This rough stone lies on the ground ... not standing proudly, but laid flat, low to the ground. Whoever wants to look at [the stone] must stoop. It is a posture of humility that brings this stone into view. A posture that we also know from the Anabaptists, who knelt before their judges and endured [and lived] according to the Sermon on the Mount.” Wolfgang Krauss, a representative from the German Mennonites, spoke of the historical accountability for wearing the uniform of the Kaiser and then the uniform of Hitler, the descendants of the Swiss Brethren who lost the peace position after losing their homes in Switzerland. I was asked to stand and be recognized as the only North American Mennonite at the event. I felt honored, at least

nominally, to be a representative of the North American Mennonites at the placing of a reconciliation memorial to the Anabaptists.

Like everything in Switzerland, the stone and the accompanying sign are inconspicuous and understated. Perhaps that is in keeping with the story of the Anabaptists during times of persecution: great significance with little fanfare. After the ceremony I slipped into the woods, down a slope and onto a different path, at a crossroads where several paths came together. I stood there in the strange half-silence of the forest, looking past the trees, seeing the path as it wound up another hill towards an undisclosed precipice. There was a stream somewhere further down the hollow. A powerful feeling came over me, to be standing in the wooded neighborhood of the Anabaptists’ former meeting place. Who walked here before? Had the companions of Michael Sattler met here?

The memorial stone has peaks and valleys, like the landscape of the canton of Schaffhausen. The Reformation also had peaks of “truth and realization” and an “abyss which leads to deep wounds,” as Sabine Aschmann said in her address at the memorial. The placing of a stone was a high point for those involved in the movement to foster historical accountability (*historischen Schuld*). Most of all, participants at the *Täuferstein* dedication left the event with increased historical awareness and a sense of having participated in something meaningful and important. I know I did. 🌿

Photo: Sabine Aschmann, pastor of the Reformed Church in Thayngen, speaks to the 300 gathered to dedicate the Anabaptist Stone: “This rough stone lies ... flat, low to the ground ... a posture of humility. We know this posture of humility from the Anabaptists, who knelt before their judges and endured [and lived] according to the Sermon on the Mount.”

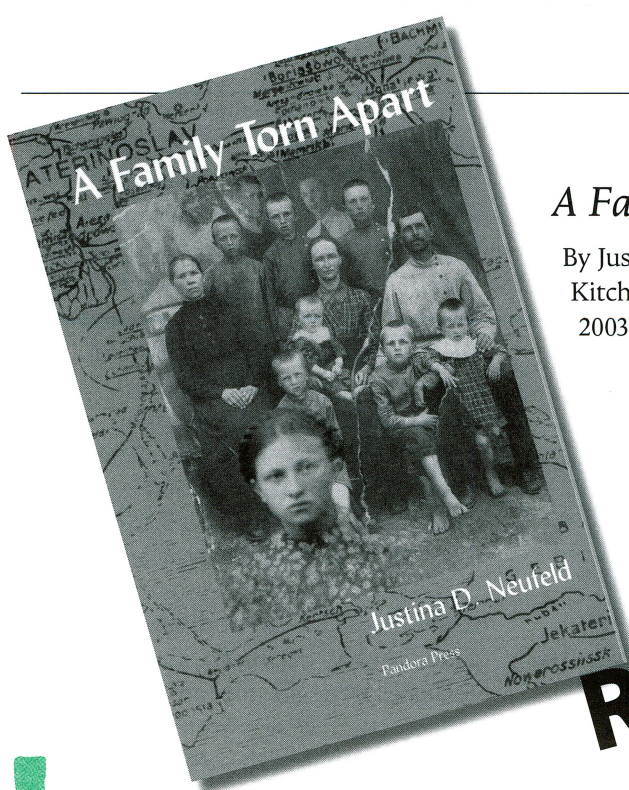
Photo by Wolfgang Krauss



Reuben Miller is coordinator of the Military Counseling Network for the German Mennonite Peace Committee,

Bammmental, Germany. His recent U.S. residence was Harrisonburg, Virginia.





## A Family Torn Apart

By Justina D. Neufeld  
Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press.  
2003.



In my childhood I heard from my family the name of Justina Neufeld, a German-speaking Mennonite refugee from the Soviet Union who in 1948 had stayed for a time with my grandparents' family in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Justina had recently arrived from Holland, where Mennonite Central Committee workers had befriended and helped sustain her and many other refugees. As a seventeen-year-old newcomer to the Mountain Lake community, she was a few years old than my mother and her siblings. Justina earned her way as a household worker but also attended public school, where she quickly learned English and made remarkable academic progress.

Justina had been the youngest of ten children in her Dutch-Prussian Mennonite family in the Ukraine, and everyone in the Neufeld clan had experienced chaos and violent upheaval during the war. Fleeing the repressive Stalinist regime in 1943, Justina and six other family members had made a harrowing crossing to the Polish border, reaching temporary safety. But with the war still raging, the family splintered further as Justina's mother sent her to stay with her brother's family, who had recently settled in France. For the next several years, Justina lost contact

with most of her siblings, as well as her mother, and lived in constant dread of deportation to the Soviet Union. Finally, in 1947, after years of uncertainty about her status and the fate of loved ones, Justina, along with her brother Gerhard and his family, entered the United States through the refugee assistance program of MCC.

In the years following her Mountain Lake sojourn, Justina stayed in contact with my grandparents, and by the late 1990s I became aware of her project to write the story of her earlier life. The experiences of her past—of the Neufeld family's dispersion across North America, Europe, and parts of Asia—have until now been mostly privately-held memories. In this book, however, her experiences—and by extension, the terror experienced by many European Mennonites in that time—are shared for a broader reading audience. *A Family Torn Apart* is Justina's unflinching tribute to her parents and her eight older brothers, sister, and great-aunt, "Tante," who lived with the Neufeld family as their world shattered in the summer of 1941.

Justina was age ten that year, when the Soviets' war with Germany began and Justina's father—along

with other Mennonite men of her village—was abducted. For the next two years the family lived under military occupation, sharing the grief of neighbors whose husbands and sons had also disappeared. As the German army began to retreat to the west, the Neufelds and many of their German-speaking neighbors fled for their lives. No one knew what lay ahead; they could only guess what they might need to survive. Justina recalls how on the last day in their home village of Gnadental, the family decided what to carry on their journey. Their Krueger clock was carefully wrapped and loaded onto the wagon. Two weeks later, one of Justina's brothers, fearing that the clock and a prized sewing machine were too heavy for the horses, prepared to leave them by the roadside. Justina's mother would not hear of it, insisting: "They will buy bread for us some day" (p. 113). Years later, Justina would learn that her mother and sister—after forced repatriation to the Soviet Union—had indeed managed to stay alive by trading the household items for food.

*A Family Torn Apart* is an apt title for the family's unfolding tragedy. A reprinted torn photograph of the Neufeld family—taken before Justina's birth—serves as the book's cover and as metaphor for the narrative itself. The author, reflecting on the trauma of events sixty years ago, says that she could not have written her story earlier, "because the wounds of separation were too raw" (p. 17). She adds: "I knew from the beginning of my life that I was loved .... This closeness with my parents was a tremendous source of comfort to me in my years of flight and turmoil, but also made my final and unexpected separations from Papa and Mama more painful when they happened to me at age ten and at age thirteen. From my family I got the basic values that guided my life" (p. 197).

Now a U.S. citizen, Justina has put

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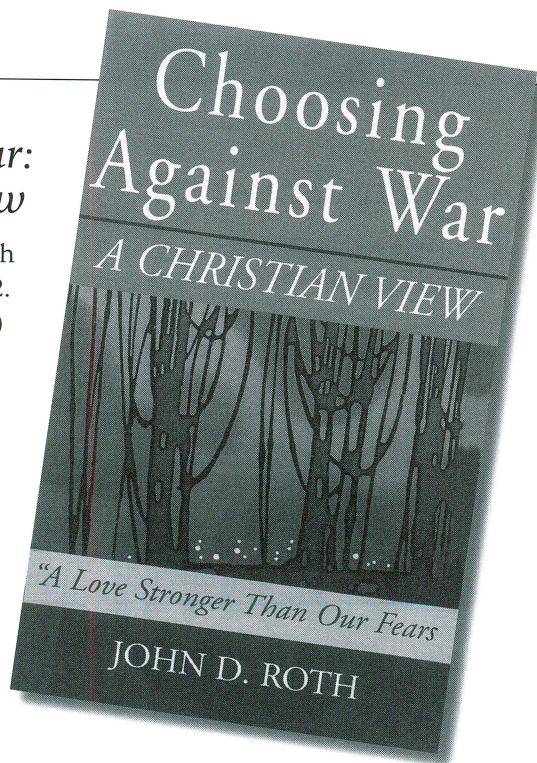


## Choosing Against War: A Christian View

By John D. Roth

Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 2002.

203 pp. \$9.99 (paperback)



In a time in United States history when patriotic unity and military adventures against foreign threats have captured the national soul and sent Americans off to fight in other lands, what is the meaning of the “good news” of the gospel? In a post-9/11 America waging a war at home against an invisible and stateless terrorist enemy—replete with code orange alerts, fighter plane escorts, grounded planes, and hijacking warnings—does the church have any unique insights or words of counsel to offer? As Americans wonder what freedoms and conveniences they are willing to give up in order to rebuild their own fragile sense of security, can Christian faith speak to the fear that has led our nation to create a Department of Homeland Security?

Big questions such as these are ones that John D. Roth, professor of history at Goshen College and editor of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, aims to wrestle with in this work intended for both Christian and non-Christian readers. He has taken up his pen with the conviction that “the gospel of Jesus Christ does indeed speak to the crises of our day with a perspective that is both distinctive and unique” (p. 7) and to present “a straightforward argument that the gospel of Jesus Christ should

lead all Christians to renounce violence and to love all human beings, including our enemies, with the same generous love that God has shown to us” (p. 9).

The result is this eloquent, eminently readable essay that attempts to explore how Christians might look differently on the world if we seriously believed God’s love to be stronger than our fears about our own security. Concerned that American culture teaches only two ways of responding to fear—“a cowardly retreat or a fight to the finish”—Roth is eager to offer a third alternative, found in Jesus Christ: “trust in God—and in the transforming, surprising power of love” (p. 10). Roth’s style is invitational rather than polemical, encouraging the reader to look at the reality of a violent world through different lenses and different narratives than “the default impulse toward patriotic unity and a steely determination to exact ‘an eye for an eye’” (p. 8). Think again about the myths of our culture, take a fresh look at Christ’s teaching and way, question what passes for reason and common sense—exhortations such as these are found throughout the six chapters of his essay.

Roth opens by examining the popular

evangelical question “What Would Jesus Do?” and by pointing out that a serious grappling with this problem cannot fail to bring us face-to-face with Christ’s clear, consistent teachings on love—including love for the enemy. He then moves to an examination of one of the core assumptions of post-Enlightenment Western culture—that some kind of coercive violence is ultimately needed if good is to triumph over evil—and suggests that this is, at bottom, an atheistic, Nietzschean perspective to which God is irrelevant. Roth follows this debunking of “the myth of redemptive violence” by suggesting an alternative reality-constructing narrative in the biblical account of the creation, fall and redemption of Shalom—life in harmony with God, with each other, and with nature.

For pacifist Christians to live consistently in such a worldview and to make their case to an indifferent or hostile world without succumbing to relativism requires humility. In a very engaging chapter that puts new zip into an old concept, Roth spells out what this means both negatively and positively. “The humility of respectful dissent,” he stresses, “calls Christian pacifists to listen carefully to the concerns raised by their opponents” (p. 116). This longer treatment extends his refreshing disclaimer at the outset that “this book will not argue that pacifism always ‘works,’ in the sense of bringing about a resolution to conflict in which the aggressor inevitably backs down” (p. 13).

A subsequent chapter tackles the basic question of Christian allegiance, arguing that it lies not primarily in patriotic loyalty to a particular nation or state that all too easily is assumed to be Christian, but rather in a commitment to Christ that must rise above allegiance to the nation-state. Pacifist Christians will have, he asserts, “rather limited expectations of the




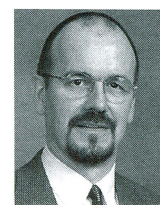
state or the political process” (p. 155). Aware that this stance often appears too negatively defined to fellow citizens, Roth concludes by outlining what Christian pacifists can affirm and how they can put their faith into action. He calls for Christian citizens to be “politically engaged—not primarily in the traditional sense of party politics and partisan lobbying, but in more creative and transformative ways that remain true to the principles of Christian love and humility” (p. 13). This, he suggests, is best done “by living lives of personal integrity, by nurturing the dignity and well-being of their neighbors, by fostering perspectives that transcend national borders, and by bearing witness in word and deed to the promise of God’s Shalom” (p. 13).

By focusing on fear as the root of both insecurity and violence in today’s world, and notably in the United States—ironically the most powerful nation in the world, at least by most

secular standards—Roth has hit the nail on the head. Yet how is this fear to be overcome, not just in the church but also in wider society? Will a theological answer suffice, or must there also be a political one?

While extending “an invitation to live more fully and joyfully in the Christian conviction that ‘God’s love is stronger than our fears’” (p. 9), Roth does not hesitate to admit—quite rightly—that “a life lived in dependence on God offers no predictable outcomes or guarantees of physical safety” (p. 13). And while such an affirmation is appropriate from the pen of a Christian pacifist, in the mouth of political authorities charged with the maintenance of civil peace it will likely sound like a dangerous disclaimer. For where there is no ordered civic peace and a continual fear and danger of violent death, life becomes, in the famous words of Thomas Hobbes, “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and

short.” It is in order to overcome such paralyzing fear and to provide basic security—ordinary civic peace—that governments are formed. To be certain, their powers are—and should be—limited; and governments can foment plenty of violence outside their borders, as sadly we have seen ours do over the past year. But Hobbes’ observations on the crucial role of government in overcoming domestic social fear should not be too easily overlooked or dismissed by those of us who nevertheless affirm, along with Roth, that we are called “to live more fully and joyfully in the Christian conviction that ‘God’s love is stronger than our fears.’” 



*J. Robert Charles, Goshen, Indiana is director for Europe at Mennonite Mission Network and a member of Waterford Mennonite Church.*

## Heritage Matters Endnotes

... continued from page 5

<sup>1</sup> Thiesen, John D., “From Cereal Boxes to Web Pages: Introducing Our North Newton Archives,” *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, October 2002, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> Proceedings of the Mennonite General Conference, held at the Blough Church near Johnstown, Pa., Oct. 25, 1911, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup> Juhnke, James C., *Vision, Doctrine, War, Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930*, Herald Press, 1989, p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Bender, Harold S., “Introduction,” Wenger, J. C., *The Mennonites in North America*, Herald Press, 1966, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of Mennonite General Conference, Hesston, Kansas, August 23-24, 1933.

<sup>6</sup> Alice Kauffman Gingerich interview with John E. Sharp, Scottsdale, Pa., 1991.

<sup>7</sup> Report to Mennonite General Conference, Allensville, Pa., August 23-25, 1939, p. 28.


<sup>8</sup> Thiesen, John D., *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, October 2002, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Wenger, J. C., editor, *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, April 1949, p. 1.

## *A Family Torn Apart ... continued from page 11*

down roots in this country, but, as part of lifelong effort to keep connected to family members, she made several trips in the 1970s to see relatives in Kazakhstan. In 1995, she returned for the first time to her home community, Gnadenental, a village of the Schlachting-Baratov region of the Ukraine. Six years later, she and her husband traveled to the Ukraine once more, again gathering information and looking—after many years of few answers—for information about her father, Dietrich Peter Neufeld, who had been arrested by the Soviet State Police in 1941 and never been heard from again. Two of Justina’s brothers, Peter and Franz Neufeld, had managed to escape westward during World War II, but, in German-occupied Poland, both had been naturalized as German citizens and drafted into the German army. By the end of the war, they had disappeared, and, despite many years of trying, neither Justina

nor other surviving family members managed to learn their fate.

Despite its wrenching narrative, *A Family Torn Apart* reconnects the Neufeld family through memory amplified by photographs, maps, sketches, and, above all, the author’s own resolute voice. Now a retired nurse and mental health care administrator, Justina Neufeld tells her story as a compelling cross-continental epic. Her book is a lament as powerful as the Psalmist’s plaintive cry, with which she opens her work: “From where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord.” In the face of unspeakable loss, she shows us profound grace in human experience. 

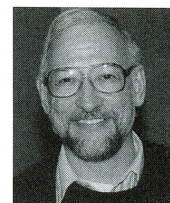


*Rachel Waltner Goossen teaches history at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas.*



# Scrapbook page, Goshen

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist



(Left photo) S. F. Coffman, seen here at the Historical Committee meeting held in the home of Ira D. Landis, Bareville, Pa., June 13, 1951. Coffman was part of the first committee of ten members appointed in 1911 and served for over 50 years, 39 as chair. He died in 1954.

Photographer: Stanley Shenk. Source: Historical Committee Collection.

(Right photo) Another long time member of the Historical Committee was J. C. Wenger (on left), seen here in his home in 1987 with Leonard Gross (right). Gross served as executive secretary and archivist for the committee from 1970 to 1990 and as consulting archivist, 1991-97.

Photographer: Jan Gleysteen.  
Source: Historical Committee Collection.



(Right photo) The Historical Committee of 1960 is gathered for the dedication of the new Goshen College Biblical Seminary Chapel. Ira Landis gave a meditation on the Holy Spirit on this occasion. (Left to right) John A. Hostetler, Melvin Gingerich, John W. Snyder, Harold S. Bender, Gerald Studer, Ira D. Landis, Irvin Horst, Cornelius J. Dyck, Grant Stoltzfus, Herman Ropp, Samuel S. Wenger, and John C. Wenger. Dyck served as a representative of the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

Source: Historical Committee Collection.



(Left photo) The members of the Historical Committee of 1996 met for their spring meeting at Bayshore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla. Members: (standing, left to right) John D. Thiesen, Carolyn Wenger, Lawrence Klippenstein, Hope Kauffman Lind, Nate Yoder, and Kimberly Schmidt; (seated): Marcus Miller, John Sharp (director), Arlin Lapp, and John D. Roth. Klippenstein and Thiesen were representing the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Source: Historical Committee Collection.



# Scrapbook page, North Newton

by John D. Thiesen,  
Archivist



John F. Schmidt in the old archives room of the Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, ca. 1978.



July 22, 1958, members of the historical committees of the General Conference Mennonite Church and GC districts meet for business and to commemorate the 275th anniversary of the arrival of Mennonites in Germantown in the Germantown Mennonite Church; used in *Mennonite Life*, October 1958, p. 169.



The H. R. Voth photographic collection at the Mennonite Library and Archives consists of over 2000 negatives, glass slides, and original prints created by H. R. Voth, a General Conference Mennonite missionary to the Hopi in Arizona beginning in 1893. Most of the photographic images relate to the Hopi and many have been used in historical and anthropological publications about the Hopi.



Left to right, James C. Juhnke, Robert S. Kreider, John D. Thiesen; selecting photos for Juhnke's book *Creative Crusader*, July 1994.





## The back page

### Church bells ring in Zurich

Remarkable and memorable are two words I have been using to describe the Reformed-Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference in Zurich, Switzerland, on June 26. Though it takes more than an event to effect reconciliation and to build relationships, this was a major step in the conversation between Reformed and Mennonites.

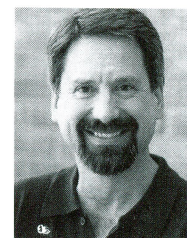
The first of several highlights was the sermon that Larry Miller, executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference, delivered from the lofty pulpit of the Grossmunster. (He would want it to be known that he used that pulpit at the insistence of the Reformed church.) A second highpoint was the ringing of the church bells of Zurich at the dedication of the historical marker by the Limmat River. The plaque notes the executions of Felix Manz, Hans Landis, and five unnamed Anabaptists executed by the Zurich authorities between 1527 and 1532. A third moving event was the statement of confession offered by Ruedi Reich, president of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich. A fourth profound moment was the storytelling of Lawrence Hart in the Grossmunster, recounting his role in a Southern Cheyenne peacemaking ceremony in Cheyenne, Okla.

The statement of confession said in part: "We acknowledge this historic sin and, from today's point of view, consider it a betrayal of the gospel. Before God ... we point to this dark side of the Reformation, and we ask God and you, dear brothers and sisters of the Mennonite faith, to forgive us."

In response, Thomas Gyger, president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference, said, "In the name of my Mennonite brothers and sisters coming from different horizons, I ... express my gratitude to the authorities of the city of Zurich, as well as to those of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich. For some of us, this plaque represents a way of perpetuating the memory of our past and, we hope, the dialogue; others see in it the strong sign of an important event that tomorrow will be over, but that we will refer to in order to testify of our reconciliation."

Look forward to reading more about the Zurich conference, including the full text of the statements, in the upcoming October issue.

—John E. Sharp, editor



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#### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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# Felix Manz



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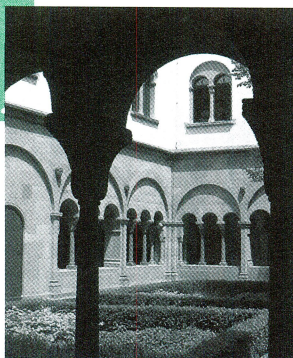


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## In this issue



**Page 3:** Franklin Yoder reflects on the Zurich conference and its implications. Though he felt no need for the reconciliation, he found the attitude and actions of the Reformed Church "refreshing and uplifting." He observes that "we are always quick to celebrate our triumphs," but reluctant to "acknowledge our shortcomings." Should we have apologized for the chaos and disruption created by our spiritual forebears?



**Page 6:** John Rempel ponders the meaning of the Zurich event. He writes of his "enormous gratitude," but also of "a lingering sense of unfinished business." He found it remarkable that an institution of power was able to repent, "surely a sign of the gospel." But, he wonders whether repentance has brought about any change. If we can "imitate the spirit of repentance," we may be better suited to engage our Swiss Reformed friends in further dialogue.



**Pages 9; 11:** The two statements of confession made by Reudi Reich, president of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich, are printed in full. Reich's statements are followed by the responses of Ernest Geiser and Thomas Gyger of the Swiss Mennonite Conference. The texts, photos, and more reflections are posted on our web site:  
[http:// www.mcusa-archives.org/](http://www.mcusa-archives.org/)



**Page 16:** The story we have told for centuries of the birth of the Anabaptist Movement, and the persecution and execution of the radical reformers in Zurich now has a new ending. The new stone tablet along the Limmat River in Zurich bears witness to the acknowledgement and confession of the Reformed Church, and gives the story a new twist.

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Historical  
Committee





## Zurich reflections

by Franklin Yoder

On Saturday, June 26, I was privileged to attend a meeting of reconciliation between Mennonites and the Reformed church of Zurich. This meeting was held at the invitation of the Reformed church as part of a celebration of the 500th year anniversary of the birth of Heinrich Bullinger, an important leader in the early Reformed church. Bullinger was head of the Zurich church from 1531 until 1575, and during this period several Anabaptists were martyred or banished by the city of Zurich with the encouragement of Reformed church leaders.

In that time, church and state were closely intertwined, and Bullinger believed that the Anabaptists posed a very real threat to religious institutions and to civil society. He, along with other church leaders, encouraged the city council of Zurich to punish Anabaptists, and between 1527 and 1614 seven Anabaptists were killed in Zurich. As members of the present-day Reformed church of Zurich planned this celebration of Bullinger's birth, they decided to include a time of reconciliation for acts they now believe were wrong.

Most of our meetings were held in the Grossmünster, a large prominent church in which the Reformed church came into being under the leadership of Ulrich Zwingli in the early 1520s. Zwingli was a powerful Reformation figure who steered Zurich away from Catholicism and Martin Luther toward a new brand of Protestantism that emphasized the importance of biblical preaching, viewed communion as a symbol and not a sacrament, and rejected the role of the mass and the Catholic clergy. Zwingli resigned his position as a priest of the Catholic church and asked the city council of Zurich to reinstate him under its authority, which the council did in January 1523. This marked the beginning of the Swiss Reformation; it was the first Protestant state church.



Among Zwingli's followers were several young men who pushed for even more radical reforms. Specifically, they said that only adults should be baptized, various practices that were linked to older Catholic traditions should be abandoned, and Zwingli should separate himself from the Zurich city council and accelerate a program of reforms. Zwingli refused and urged the city council to reject the radical steps proposed by Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and others of the first group of Anabaptists. When the city council did refuse, Grebel, Manz, Georg Blaurock, and several others baptized each other in defiance of church and city laws. Since these actions threatened the authority of the church and the state, they were seen as treasonous and Anabaptists were labeled heretics. Zwingli helped direct the proceedings that sentenced Felix Manz to death. Manz was drowned in the Limmat River on January 5, 1527.



Ulrich Zwingli died in 1531 while fighting Catholic armies in Kappel, Switzerland. After his death, Heinrich Bullinger became the new Reformed leader, a position he held for the next 44 years. Like Zwingli, he saw the Anabaptists as heretics and lawbreakers, and he advocated punishing them for their action, a belief he acted upon.

The celebration commemorating Bullinger's birth was largely celebratory. Bullinger was a prolific writer and preacher, and he gave critical leadership to a movement that was in its infancy. But the planners noted that there was a dark side to this time, and at the dedication of a plaque marking the death of Felix Manz and the other martyrs we heard the words offered by Reudi Reich, president of the Reformed church of canton of Zurich, acknowledging the "historic sin" of the Reformed church in persecuting the Anabaptists (see the complete text on page 9 of this issue).

I went to the Zurich not certain of what to expect. Personally, I had never anguished over the fact that the Reformed church had played a major part in Felix Manz's execution. I harbored no ill-will toward people who call themselves Reformed, and I was not sure how to be reconciled to someone who had done me no wrong. But as I attended the various events, I found the experience to be fulfilling and my perspective broadened and changed.

Two things impressed me. First, being in Zurich and seeing the church and its setting deepened my understanding of how and why the events of 1525 led to Manz's death. There is no substitute for being at the place where history has been made, and this was true for me.

An exhibit inside the Grossmünster told the story of Heinrich Bullinger, and it helped explain why the Reformers saw people such as Manz as serious threats. This was a turbulent time, and the Reformed church and the city leaders in Zurich found themselves caught between Catholics and Anabaptists. By leaving the Catholic church, Zwingli and other reformers took a tremendous risk that placed their lives and the lives of the citizens of Zurich in danger. When Manz, Grebel, and others agitated for even more radical change, the threats came from the opposite direction. In the minds of Zwingli, other Reformed leaders, and members of the Zurich city government, the Anabaptists raised the potential for anarchy and chaos. In order to stop this movement from undermining an already fragile society, they felt they needed to make an example to show the

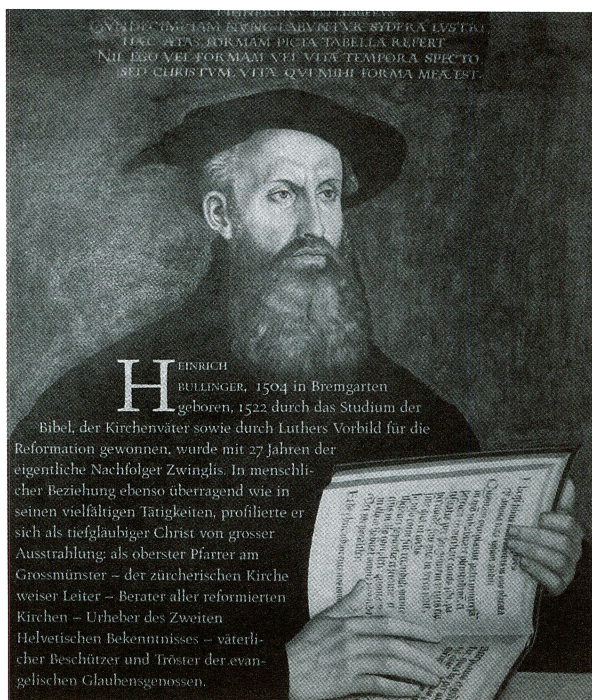
citizens of Zurich the consequences of disobedience to the church.

Secondly, even though I did not feel a compelling need to be reconciled to the Reformed church of Zurich, I found the event to be moving. It was humbling to be told of the mistakes of others and to be asked to accept the request of forgiveness. It is hard to know how to respond when groups speak of forgiveness, reconciliation, and retribution for wrongs committed centuries ago. In a sense, the appropriate time for this to happen was many years earlier. Nonetheless, the words I heard reminded me that wrongs can be addressed years later and can bring a sense of healing.

A related question is whether there is meaning in one group of people asking another group for forgiveness. No one from the Reformed church who was at the meeting had persecuted any of the Mennonites who attended. There are other movements today to make amends for wrongs committed centuries ago, and I have always viewed these efforts with uncertainty. I am not sure what my responsibility is for an action committed by someone who lived in another time and place and to whom I am connected only by nationality, religion, or race.

But as I watched and listened, I decided there can be value in such requests. I was especially impressed with the expressions of regret and statements of hope offered by representatives of the Reformed church. They were taking their history seriously, and by not ignoring this aspect of their past they showed an honesty and sense of responsibility that I found refreshing and uplifting. The Reformed church may have received the greatest benefit from this time, because asking for forgiveness is more difficult and perhaps more meaningful than accepting forgiveness.





By taking this action, the Reformed church recognized its connection to the past. We are always quick to celebrate our triumphs and claim them as our own, but too often we are less willing to acknowledge our shortcomings and failures. The Reformed church accepted its failures honestly and openly.

Part of me wondered if we as Anabaptists should also have apologized for the actions of our spiritual ancestors. Our own histories have mostly overlooked the chaos and disruption our Anabaptist

forebears brought to the society in which they lived. I do believe that killing the Anabaptists was wrong, but I also see how their actions were at times extreme and unhelpful. There is ample evidence that some early Anabaptists operated with a sense of righteous indignation, stubbornness, and arrogance that is characteristic of people who believe they alone have an insight into God's will. There are usually two sides to every story, and that is the side of our history that we speak of infrequently, if at all.

One lesson that comes from this time is that changing religious ideas and practices is rarely smooth or easy. We look back on this time with the benefit of almost 500 years of perspective and from the comfort of a society that tolerates and accepts us. To us, the issues that set people against each other in Zurich in 1525 seem distant and even odd. But we should not forget that, to those who lived in those times, the problems were very real and had far-reaching consequences. The Reformed church of Zurich dealt with some of those consequences in June 2004, and by so doing set an example we would do well to emulate. 🌿



Franklin Yoder is an academic advisor at the University of Iowa and also teaches courses in the history department. He is chair of the Mennonite Church USA

Historical Committee. He and his wife, Jane, are active members of the Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

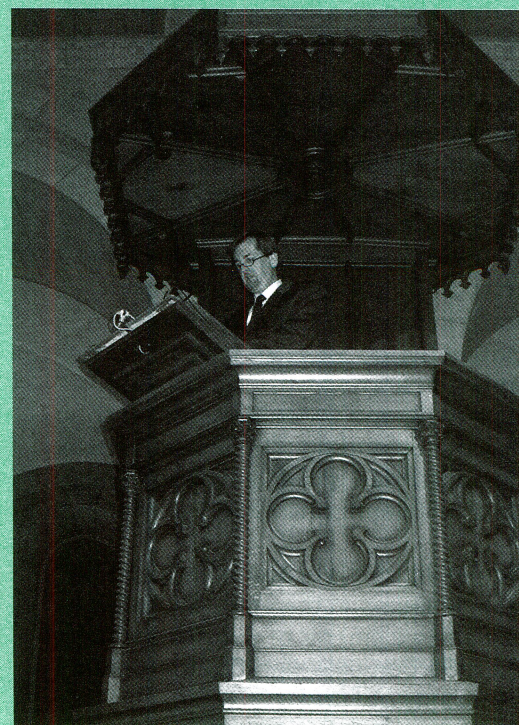
"The history that began in this very place nearly five centuries ago, with one group of people gathered around one Bible, listening to one man (Zwingli) preaching daily from the Gospel of Matthew has resulted in at least two communities, two identities, and two traditions too often one over against the other."

"Today, in the spirit of Zechariah, you—Reformed Christians—open your city and the church in it not only to daughters and sons of those put to death or exiled in the 16th century and later. More importantly, you open yourselves to another look at the convictions those exiles incarnated."

"Where we encounter one another with a common commitment to Scripture as normative and openness to mutual correction and sharing, we can expect to be led by the Spirit beyond our brokenness ..."

—Excerpts from June 26, 2004 sermon in the Grossmünster, Zurich, Switzerland by Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference executive secretary. Miller resides in Strasbourg, France.

See the full text of the sermon on our web site: <http://www.mcusa-archives.org/>





## Reformed-Mennonite dialogue in Zurich: Reflections on its significance

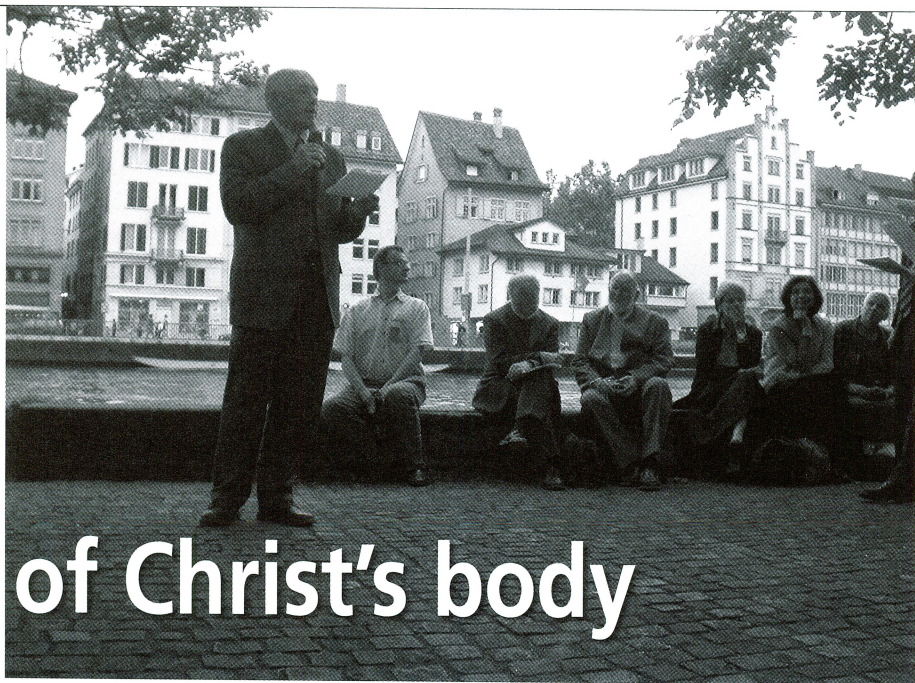
# for the unity of Christ's body

by John Rempel

If we remember that the first Mennonite meetinghouse in Switzerland was not built until 1896, we can imagine how momentous it was for Mennonites there when the Reformed church of the canton of Zurich offered to apologize for persecuting Anabaptists in past centuries. So precarious was Mennonite existence in Switzerland three and a half centuries after the movement began that Mennonites worshipped in the privacy of homes and fields lest their public presence endanger them.

As a result of contact made two years ago when German, Swiss, and North American Mennonites requested a memorial marker for Felix Manz, the Swiss Reformed church initiated conversations about the conference. After an initial meeting with John Sharp in July 2003, the Reformed church invited Swiss and North American Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites, and Swiss Mennonites to consider attending. The invitation was then extended globally through Larry Miller of Mennonite World Conference.

The details of this occasion have already been described in the press. My task is to take a few elements of this rich encounter and reflect on their significance for unity in the body of Christ.



The event took place in the Grossmünster, the mother church of both Reformed and Anabaptist Christianity in Switzerland. It was here that Zwingli preached the liberating message of the Bible. It was just downriver in the council hall that the two great disputations of 1523 were held in which Grebel, Hubmaier, and others pressed their vision of renewal upon Zurichers, who had become evangelical by an act of the city council in January. These disciples of Zwingli found themselves increasingly at odds with their mentor. It was from Zwingli's pulpit that Larry Miller, executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference, preached a message of healing and challenge. It was from the baptismal font that the president of the cantonal church declared with evident emotion that the Reformed had contradicted their own understanding of the gospel by using coercion in matters of faith.

In the early evening the assembly adjourned to the spot along the Limmat River where it is thought that the first Anabaptist martyr at the hands of the Protestant church, Felix Mantz—named after the patron saint of Zurich, himself martyred in the 4<sup>th</sup> century—was drowned. There a city councilor declared on behalf of the council its apology for using state power to violate human rights. He spoke with poignant conviction about the wrongness of the persecutions (or the misguided persecutions?).

What should we make of this extraordinary gesture? I came away with enormous gratitude, and with a lingering sense of unfinished ecumenical business. On the one hand, I found it remarkable that an institution of power had asked for forgiveness. I rejoiced in the clear evidence that not only individuals, but also institutions are able to repent. That is surely a sign of the gospel. Our Reformed hosts put an aspect of their own history into question. And they did so in the year dedicated to the accomplishments of Zwingli's successor, Heinrich Bullinger. In the midst of an elaborate exhibit lionizing Bullinger stood a display documenting the ferocity of his persecution of the Anabaptists and prominently featuring a photograph of a believers baptism in a Swiss Mennonite congregation today. Bullinger had not prevailed on that front!




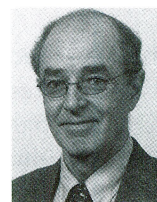
Thomas Gyger, president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference, and Larry Miller did exactly the right thing when they responded to the Reformed overtures with humility and grace. They both emphasized that an ancient wound is now healed and a new era has begun. Mennonites in the North Atlantic world are no longer a persecuted people: we can discard that picture of ourselves once and for all. Now our calling is to live out the reconciliation the Holy Spirit has worked in us. How can we carry this reality into the scholarship and church life of Reformed and Mennonite communities? How can this reality become a sign in the midst of other conflicts that repentance is possible?

What about my lingering sense of unfinished business? While I was in Zurich I made it a point to converse with as many Reformed ministers as possible. They were all gracious, receptive, and inquisitive about our ways. But they were also committed

to the notion of a state church as firmly as in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A military chaplain with whom I served on a panel made her opposition to armed ways of conflict resolution clear. But she was also emphatic about the fact that when soldiers are conscripted, the church has the duty to stand by them and contribute to the well-being of military personnel. A minister committed to reaching unchurched people confided his discouragement to me. Later in the conversation I suggested that part of the problem in making the gospel appealing might be the union of church and state. He was shocked. He couldn't imagine the church surviving without the financial and administrative support of the state.

In the end, it felt as if the Reformed had searched their consciences and the gospel and concluded that coercion in matters of faith is wrong. They had the courage of their conviction. (That prompted some appropriate self-

criticism among Mennonites present.) But what we saw was a self-searching about one aspect of the Christian life: regarding the freedom of the church from the state, nothing seemed to have changed. Our task now is to imitate the spirit of repentance and repent of our own sins. And when we've become good at that there might come a day when we can engage our Swiss friends in more dialogue about our contrary understandings of the church. 



*John D. Rempel became assistant professor of historical theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 2003. Before that he was the minister of*

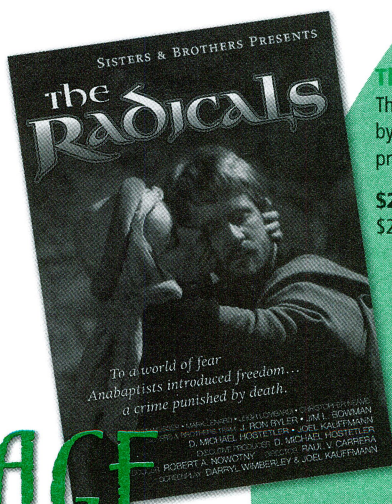
*Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship and Mennonite Central Committee liaison to the United Nations in New York City. He has been active in ecumenical work over the years, including membership on the MC Interchurch Relations Committee.*



## HERITAGE GIFTS

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Historical Committee at  
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### The Radicals DVD with new material Also available in Spanish

This newly released DVD includes commentary by Myron Augsburger, historical context by John Sharp, and a "making of" feature with interviews from several of the film's producers as well as with actor Norbert Weisser who portrays Michael Sattler on screen.

**\$29.99** (\$5 shipping & handling, add \$1 for each add'l copy)  
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Traditionally-crafted in the Jura Mountains of Switzerland, the Men Sim watch derives its name from Menno Simons.

These David Zurcher timepieces are available as pocket, wrist and pendants from **\$100-\$375**.



### Anabaptist Images Series (Icons)

Using ancient methods, iconographer Jivko Donkov begins with wood covered with gesso, which is then laboriously hand painted with dry pigments mixed into egg tempera paint. Current images available are Dirk Willems, Margaretha Sattler and van Sichem's Menno Simons, the earliest known portrait, ca. 1607.

Limited quantities are available. We cannot guarantee the images by Christmas, since each piece is handcrafted, but, we will do our best. Additional images will be added to the series.

8"x 11" Image **\$225** 12"x 16" Image **\$400**



Those of us with family roots in Switzerland (one of my ancestors, by the original name of Neuenschwander, is named in Swiss Anabaptist documents as early as 1537) may have felt a particularly personal connection with the historic significance of this reconciliation. But its future implications connect with all Mennonites—six of the ten Mennonite Church Canada persons present at the conference trace their ancestry to the North German rather than the Swiss roots, and others present there included African, Native American, and Latin American Mennonites.

I believe that this act of reconciliation has immediate and future significance for Mennonites and the various expressions of the Reformed church (Christian Reformed, Presbyterian, United, etc.) in Canada and other countries as well as in Switzerland. Only by facing up to the facts of the past can the spiritual descendants of Zwingli and the spiritual descendants of Felix Manz stand shoulder-to-shoulder as reconciled siblings in the family of

Christ. Events like this gathering in Zurich enable and force us to stop seeing ourselves either as sectarian

victims of persecution

or as more favoured by God because of the martyrdom of some of our forebears.

It was a delight to make personal acquaintance with members of the Swiss Reformed church and to worship with them as sisters and brothers in Christ who share many theological convictions, missional vision, and spiritual experiences. It was also gratifying to talk with members of the Swiss and other European Mennonite churches and to experience this reconciliation together. Such experiences hold forth the promise of future relationships.

But reconciliation requires more than one meeting, and there are still questions to be answered. Some of the questions have already begun to be discussed in meetings between the Reformed churches and Anabaptist churches in 1983 and 1989.\* These previous meetings have called for local congregations of our two traditions to get acquainted and to find ways to serve Christ together. Mennonite World Conference and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches continue to work on common interests. MC Canada and the Christian Reformed Church in Canada plan to have formal meetings next spring to talk about our common calling and convictions.

What might your congregation and your area conference do to connect with your neighbours in the Reformed tradition (or other Christian traditions)?

\*See *Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions*, edited by Ross T. Bender and Alan P. F. Sell; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991—essays presented at a symposium held in Calgary, Alta., in 1989.



Dan Nighswander is general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. He resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

## Zurich reflections

by Dan Nighswander

## Memorial Plaque

From a fishing platform here in the middle of the Limmat Felix Manz and five other Anabaptists were drowned between 1527 and 1532 during the time of the Reformation. The last Anabaptist to be executed in Zurich was Hans Landis in 1614.

HIER WURDEN MITTEN IN DER LIMMAT  
VON EINER FISCHERPLATTFORM AUS  
FELIX MANZ UND FÜNF WEITERE TÄUFER  
IN DER REFORMATIONSZEIT  
ZWISCHEN 1527 UND 1532 ERTRÄNKT.  
ALS LETZTER TÄUFER WURDE IN ZÜRICH  
HANS LANDIS 1614 HINGERICHTET.





*Pictured, from left: Dan Nighswander, executive secretary, Mennonite Church Canada; Setri Nyomi, general secretary, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Geneva; Ruedi Reich, president, Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich; and Larry Miller, general secretary, Mennonite World Conference.*

## Statement of regret

by Ruedi Reich, President, Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich

**T**he Reformed Churches and the Anabaptist movement are all essentially branches on one and the same bough of the great Christian tree. Both are offsprings of the Reformation. Right from the start however they went their separate ways, so that a tragic rift ran through the Zurich Reformation, painful traces of which are discernible to this day. Executions, persecution and expulsions were carried out to eliminate the Anabaptist movement. Yet it has survived and is still flourishing today. The descendants of those early Anabaptists are a living testimony to this.

The persecuted do not forget their history; the persecutors by contrast would prefer to do so. We—representatives of the Reformed State Church of the Canton of Zurich—acknowledge that our church has largely suppressed the story of the persecution of the Anabaptists.

*We confess* that persecution was, according to our present conviction, a betrayal of the Gospel and that our Reformed forefathers were in error on this issue.

*We affirm* that the judgement against the Anabaptists in the second Helvetian Confession, which discards the teaching of the Anabaptists as unbiblical and refuses any communion with them, is no longer valid for us and that it is now our earnest desire to discover and strengthen our common ties.

*We acknowledge* the faithful of the Anabaptist tradition as our sisters and brothers and their churches as part of the body of Christ, whose diverse members are united through the Spirit of God.


*We honour* the radical approach of the Anabaptist movement to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world as a free community of committed believers putting into practice the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

*It is time* to accept the history of the Anabaptist movement as part of our own, to learn from the Anabaptist tradition and to strengthen our mutual testimony through dialogue.

Following the example of our reformed tradition, *we confess*:

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who calls us to follow him and to be reconciled with those brothers and sisters who have any just reasons to reproach us.

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who reconciles us with God through his death on the cross and has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.

We do not belong to ourselves. We belong to Jesus Christ who tore down the wall of enmity and united people near and far in one body. 



## In Response to the Confession Coming from the Reformed Church of Zurich

given by Ernest Geiser, President of the Council of Elders of the Swiss Mennonite Church

Dear members of the Reformed Church of Zurich, our brothers and sisters in Christ,


We are very touched to have been invited to prepare and live out this day with you. Already in 1925 and in 1952, other international Mennonite representatives were officially welcomed here in this place which represents a very significant moment at the beginning of our history. Though issuing from the same source in the Reformation, Anabaptism has been marked by the breaking off and rejection of the accents of a radical theology and the “following” of Christ. Persecution, in Zurich and in other places, provoked the scattering of the Anabaptists in many other countries, where our way of understanding were lived out and tested in many different situations.

As of today, Swiss Mennonites as such are no longer present in the land around Zurich. Throughout the last few centuries we have been influenced in different ways. Having been pushed to the side, we have become used to—and even found some satisfaction in—being a bit cut off from the world and society. We confess that the reality of our communities do not always correspond to our interpretation of the gospel; we can find there conformism, atrophy, withdrawal, and pride.

History may designate us as victims and could incite us to find satisfaction in that. However, those here among you today, descendants of those Anabaptists persecuted in the past, no longer feel as victims. We do not ask for material retribution for the past: that would seem to us to be contrary to the spirit of the gospel. But the fact that you recognize the difficult points of your history in relation to ours helps us to see ourselves and to meet you differently. We receive your confession with a forgiving attitude.



For many years now, and in many places, many opportunities for collaboration between members of Reformed and Mennonite churches have demonstrated a common will to overcome our old conflicts and to live out our belonging to the same body of Christ. This is why it is sometimes embarrassing for us to be once again asked for forgiveness. Maybe it is a sign that it is the moment for all of us to revisit our past, with the help of the Holy Spirit? There is no longer any church for us to oppose, and you no longer have any believers to reintegrate by force. We maintain, however, strong convictions, which are often shared by other free church movements issued from successive revivals, in particular to that which pertains to more ethical and ecclesiological questions, that we would like to see more widely shared throughout the body of Christ. We would like to see them shared more broadly in the body of Christ, and we would like to engage in a longer dialogue concerning our church and theological traditions in order to reinforce our common witness to Jesus Christ and his gospel.

The 26th of June 2004 will remain an important step forward on the road of reconciliation. The plaque that will be unveiled today in this city of Zurich attests that actions have been taken with determination. We feel concerned by your words and deeds, and we want to express our gratitude. Dear brothers and sisters of the Reformed church of Zurich, may God bless you and give you his grace and his peace! 



## Inauguration of the Memorial Plaque to the Anabaptist Martyrs of Zurich

by Ruedi Reich, President, Reformed Church of Zurich

Dear sisters and brothers,

We commemorate here our brothers in Christ who were cruelly tortured and executed for their faith during the Reformation. The Reformation in Zurich regarded itself as a rediscovery of the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ. For this, the members of the newly forming Protestant church were also ready to give up their lives.

We are therefore all the more ashamed and pained that the Reformed church should have become a persecutor. In the Zurich of the Reformation, our brothers in the faith of Anabaptist convictions were persecuted, tortured and cruelly executed in a combined action by church and state. We acknowledge this historic sin and, from today's point of view, consider it a betrayal of the gospel. Before God and before men, we point to this dark side of the Reformation, and we ask God and you, dear brothers and sisters of the Mennonite faith, to forgive us. We are grateful for the fellowship with the Mennonites in the past and today. In the midst of a violent world, we wish to work together for peace, reconciliation, and justice. May this reconciliation with each other give us the strength to work together commissioned by Jesus Christ as agents of reconciliation, in small things and in great ones. For this, we ask God's blessing with all our heart. 🌿

## Inauguration of the Memorial Plaque

Response by Thomas Gyger, President,  
Swiss Mennonite Conference

Mr. City Councilor, dear members of the Reformed Church, our brothers and sisters in Christ,

Though the persecution of the Anabaptists was an outright injustice, we realize that what first motivated the authorities in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was to maintain public order. In a society where the church and the state were united in a single "Christianity," we understand that when our ancestors rebaptized adults who wished to be converted they were considered a serious threat.

By inaugurating this stone in the exact same place where Felix Mantz and his friends received the blood baptism, and by reaffirming in a lasting form that your predecessors were wrong in the way they treated these dissidents, you are again acting in order to reestablish justice. Your predecessors acted by necessity; you, however, act freely without being forced to.

In the name of my Mennonite brothers and sisters coming from different horizons, I express my gratitude to the authorities of the city of Zurich, as well as to those of the Reformed church of the canton of Zurich. For some of us, this plaque represents a way of perpetrating the memory of our past and, we hope, the dialogue; others see in it the strong sign of an important event that tomorrow will be over, but that we will refer to in order to testify of our reconciliation.

Today, Zurich has become a prosperous and flourishing city where rebaptisms should no longer disturb the public order. However, what would this city be without divine grace and generations of men and women filled with the word of God and with Judeo-Christian values? At one time divided, we want today in the midst of our society to join our voices to yours, dear Reformed friends, in order to repeat together the message of him who touches and transforms hearts, who is no other than Jesus Christ, our Lord. 🌿





## Tribute to Hans Landis

by James Gotwals Landis

Today I wear the name of Landis, and though I cannot bear with Hans the same cross he bore, I share with him the same faith he wore and hope to gain another crown like the one Hans hoped for.

For Hans the Sermon on the Mount became his creed and to live by faith meant to live by deed.

To Hans there was no higher law than the Word God gave. No rules by Pope or Council or king could in the least way alter right or wrong in anything.

It mattered not to Hans what reasoning the priests did use, or of what error they did him accuse; Hans rested his soul and pressed on toward his goal.

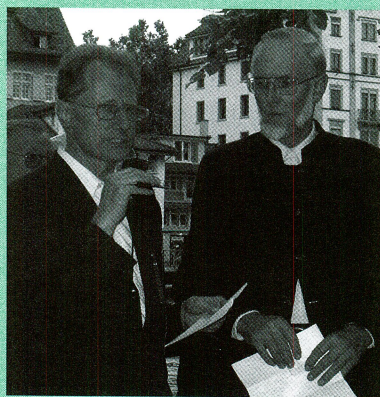
Neither Canton, Council, nor Church could expel this stately tall man from Hirzel. In spite of prison and ban, Hans always came home to serve his own fellow man.

In his gentle manner Hans continued going about encouraging those in doubt. Doing good was his redoubt.

In 1614 Hans made his final decision there at the Wolfstadt\* Prison. He freely forgave and went to his grave ... in peace.

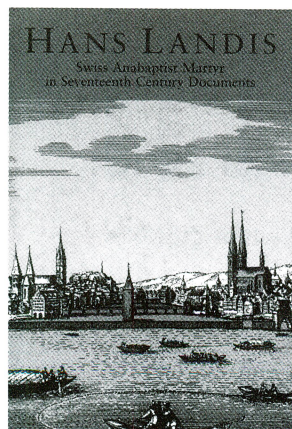
Today, 26 June 2004, I espouse the same faith Hans Landis lived out fourteen generations gone by. I am honored to bear the Landis name and to pay tribute to this great hero of faith.

\*The prison was the Wellenberg Tower. Walstatt was the place of execution, mistakenly named "Wolfstadt" in the *Martyrs Mirror*. (See *Hans Landis, Swiss Anabaptist Martyr in Seventeenth Century Documents*, James W. Lowry, Ohio Amish Library, 2003, p. 109, footnote 18). —jes



James Gotwals Landis (on the right), Petersburg, W.Va., a dairy farmer and freelance writer. He is currently working on a historical novel.

## A short reading list on Zurich



*Hans Landis, Swiss Anabaptist Martyr in Seventeenth Century Documents.*


Translated by James W. Lowry. Edited by David J. Rempel Smucker and John L. Ruth. Millersburg, Ohio: Ohio Amish Library, 2003. A remarkable new collection of sources from the Amsterdam municipal archives and elsewhere brings together various accounts of Hans Landis's defense and ministry, charges brought against him by Zurich authorities, and eyewitness accounts of his execution.

*Conrad Grebel: Son of Zurich.* Written by John L. Ruth. Scottdale, Pa., and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1975. A narrative biography of Conrad Grebel, a central character in the drama of Zurich's reformation, and the emergence of the Anabaptist movement. Told in the context of the cultural, political, and social context of the era.

*Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions.* Edited by Ross T. Bender and Alan P. F. Sell. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991. Contains papers presented and discussed at an international consultation, October 12-14, 1989, at the University of Calgary, Alberta. The topics addressed were the major issues that have divided the two traditions—baptism, peace, and church and state. Part two consists of responses to the papers by a philosopher, a sociologist, a systematic theologian, and a church historian. The conclusion contains the findings and recommendations of the conference. Mennonite presenters were Marlin E. Miller, Howard John Loewen, and Harry Loewen.

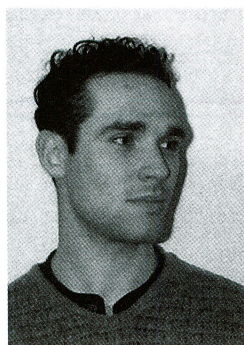
*Brothers in Christ.* Written by Fritz Blanke. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003. Details the origins of the Anabaptist movement in the little town of Zollikon, near Zurich.

*Link Anabaptist Letters from 1635 to 1645.* Translated from the *Ausbund* by John E. Kauffman (1893-1991). Atglen, Pa.: Martha K. Coffman, 1994. A true account from the brethren in Switzerland in the district of Zurich, concerning the tribulation that they endured because of the gospel.

*Anabaptism Revisited: Essays on Anabaptist/Mennonite Studies in honor of C. J. Dyck.* Walter Klaassen, editor. Scottdale, Pa., and Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 1992. See: "Oath refusal in Zurich from 1525 to 1527: The erratic emergence of Anabaptist practice," by Edmund Pries, and "The rise of the baptism of adult believers in Swiss Anabaptism," by Walter Klaassen. 



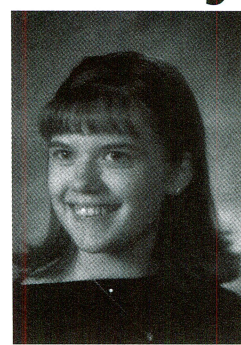
# 2004 John Horsch Essay



Jonathan Seiling



Erin Miller



Angela Dietzel

## Contest Results

The results of the 2004 John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest were announced by John E. Sharp, director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee. Fourteen students in three academic levels submitted papers on various topics in Mennonite studies. The winners are as follows:

**Class I – Seminary and graduate school:** First, Jonathan Seiling, Emmanuel College, Toronto (Ont.) School of Theology, *Solae (Quae?) Scripturae: Anabaptists and the Apocrypha*; second, H. Jean Hess, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Ind.), *Addressing One Another on the Changing Demands of Culture and Economy: The Mennonite Church Doctrine of Nonconformity, 1930-1959*; third (tie), Keith Benner, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *Education, Authority, and the Church in the life and thought of John Ellsworth Hartzler* and Tamara Sawatzky, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, *Material Culture: The Dutch Windmill as an Icon for Russian Mennonites*.


**Class II – Undergraduate college and university:** First, Erin Miller, Bluffton (Ohio) University, *The Kalona Amish: Retention and Defection Patterns of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*; second, Rebecca Allen, Goshen (Ind.) College, *My Birth, My Way: Reproductive Agency among Three Generations of Amish Women in Elkhart-LaGrange and Nappanee Settlements*; third, Darren T. Byler, Kent (Ohio) State University, *The Geography of Difference: Constructing Identity in the Holmes County, Ohio, Amish Community*.

**Class III – high school:** First, Angela Dietzel, Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, *Welsh Mountain Home: The Path to Today's Vision*; second, Elizabeth Ewearitt, Lancaster Mennonite High School, *Art Therapy at Philhaven*; third, Monika Burkholder, Eastern Mennonite High School (Harrisonburg, Va.), *Glendon Blosser: An Effective Leader*.

In each class first-place winners are awarded \$100, second place \$75, and third place \$50. First-place winners also receive a one-year subscription to *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. All entrants receive a one-year subscription to *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

Winning papers will be posted on the Historical Committee Web site: [www.mcusa-archives.org](http://www.mcusa-archives.org).

This year's entries were judged by Perry Bush, professor of history, Bluffton University; Walter Sawatzky, professor of church history and mission and director of Mission Studies Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; and Jan Bender Shetler, associate professor of history, Goshen College.

The annual contest is sponsored by Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and is named in honor of John Horsch (1867-1941), the German-American Mennonite historian and polemicist who did much to reawaken interest in Anabaptist and Mennonite studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The deadline for submission of entries for next year's contest is June 15, 2005. 

**Next year's  
John Horsch  
Mennonite History  
Essay Contest  
submission  
deadline is  
June 15, 2005.**




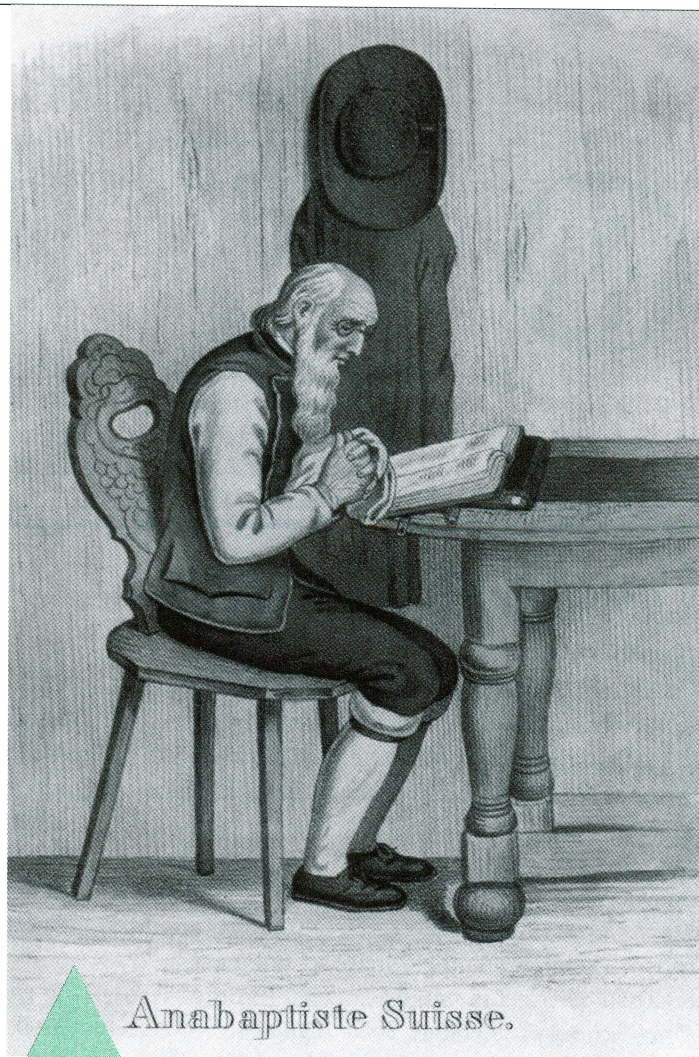
## Swiss Anabaptist Images of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Images of Anabaptists in Switzerland have had less exposure in North America than images of Menno Simons and images of martyrs such as Dirk Willems in the *Martyrs Mirror*, but there have been some. Here are a few of those paintings.

One of the earliest American uses of Swiss Mennonite portraiture was in 1942, when John Horsch featured Gabriel Lory's 19<sup>th</sup> century painting on the back cover of the dust jacket of his book *Mennonites in Europe* (1942). Menno Simons appeared on the front. This picture, along with some 5-8 other prints, appeared in the book as well. In 1955, seven images of Swiss Anabaptists appeared in Volume I of *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), and in 1970, about ten images of Swiss, Alsatian, French, and German Mennonites appeared in *Mennonite Attire through the Centuries* (Melvin Gingerich, 1970). In 1985, seven original images of Anabaptism in Zurich, Switzerland, including Hutterite missionaries, were published in 1985 in *Christian History* (Volume IV, No. 1), through the efforts of Heinhold Fast; the original drawings are part of Heinrich Thomann's manuscript copy of Heinrich Bullinger's *History of the Reformation* (1605/06) (Ms. B 316) and the Wick Collection at the Central Library, Zurich, Switzerland.

In 1989, Mennonite Historical Society of Switzerland published eight of these Swiss Anabaptist images in a book (pages 169-188), accompanied by an article by Ulrich J. Gerber entitled "Ikonographie der Schweizer Täufertrachten" [Iconography of Swiss Anabaptist attire] (pages 165-168). The book was called "*Lebenn Nach der Ler Jhesu*" [Living according to the teachings of Jesus] (Schweizerischer Verein für Täufergeschichte, 1989). This society has also distributed some of these prints as membership cards, along with the journal *Mennonitica Helvetica*. Paul and Jean Kraybill have assembled many of these prints in an exhibit, "Costume and Genre: Scenes from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century European Mennonite Life" (exhibited, for example, at Mennonite World Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 1990).

In his interpretive article, Gerber indicates that the artist's focus on the uniqueness of Swiss Mennonite dress happened only after the French revolution, when there was toleration of minority religious groups. Gerber also points to the pietistic renewal movement (1670-1710) as the time when the Swiss brethren began to emphasize the importance of dress. Before then they had dressed like other persons of the economic classes to which they belonged. By this time there were also making their own clothes. 



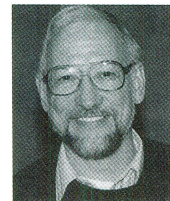
Anabaptiste Suisse.

"Anabaptiste Suisse" [Swiss Mennonite], by Gabriel M. Lory (1784-1846). John Horsch includes the following explanation of this picture on the dust jacket (back page) of his book *Mennonites in Europe* (1942): "Mennonites generally cultivated a simple and unobtrusive type of piety in home and in public assembly. The Word of God was dear to them; they loved it and made it a part of themselves, so that it became the very foundation of their faith and life. The devout study and conscientious practice of Christ's teachings have to a great degree shaped life and conduct for them. The simple life, frugality and thrift, integrity and sincerity, humble devotion to God, have been marked characteristics among them through the years." The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Volume I, 1955) identifies it as "Anabaptist man, ca. 1750." *Mennonite Attire through the Centuries* (1970) printed this illustration in color as a frontispiece and labeled it as "Typical figure of a Swiss Mennonite preacher, ca. 1750, showing long stockings and low shoes." Gingerich thought this was a preacher and focused on his clothing. This color print, along with two others of Anabaptists drawn by Lory, is published in *Lebenn Nach der Ler Jhesu* (1989), pp. 174-179. Credit: Historical Committee Collection, *Mennonite Attire through the Centuries*.



# Scrapbook pages, Goshen

by Dennis Stoesz, Archivist



For images of Menno Simons, see our Web site at <http://www.mcusa-archives.org/MHB/mhb-portraits.html>, and for images found in the *Martyrs Mirror*, see our Web site at <http://www.bethelks.edu/services/mla/images/martyrsmirror>.

"Costume des Anabaptistes Suisses" by J. Reinhardt (1749-1829), in *Collection des costumes suisse des XXII cantons*, published by Birmann and Huber, Basel, Switzerland, 1802/03. Paintings can be seen in the Bern Historical Museum in Switzerland. The print appears in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Volume I, 1955) and is identified as "Basel Swiss couple, ca. 1824, by Joseph Reinhard, (1749-1829)." Also found in *Mennonite Attire Through the Centuries* (1970) as "Costume of Swiss Anabaptist, by Reinhard" (p. 40). This color print is published in *Lebenn Nach der Ler Jhesu* (1989), pp. 172-173. The Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, has two original color prints of this painting, and a framed print is part of the art collection of the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College. *Credit: Historical Committee Collection, Mennonite Attire through the Centuries.*

Bernese Anabaptist farm family gathered around the courtyard, painted by Aurele Robert, ca. 1850. Original found in Musee de Beaux Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland. Print appears in *Mennonite*

*Encyclopedia* (Volume I, 1955), and in *Mennonite Attire through the Centuries* (1970), p. 92. A framed print of this painting is part of the art collection of the Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College. *Credit: Historical Committee Collection, Mennonite Attire through the Centuries.*







## The story now has a new ending

When Mennonites and Amish from rural Pennsylvania or Ohio have encountered the rolling hills of the Swiss Emmental, they have often exclaimed with a sense of awe, "I feel so at home here." I told the Zurich conference that now, after enjoying the generosity and hospitality of the Reformed Church, "We will now also feel at home in Zurich."

And that changes how I will tell the story. As usual, I will tell the story of the Zurich reformation fueled by Zwingli's preaching in the Grossmünster, the vigorous debates between the impatient radicals and their former mentor in the council hall a few blocks downriver; the first believers baptism on Neustadt Gasse within the shadow of the cathedral; the passionate missionary fervor of the new "evangelicals"; the martyrdom of Felix Manz in the icy waters of the Limmat River; the stubborn resistance of Hans Landis, who told the Zurich authorities they had no right to seize his property or expel him from the canton because "the earth is the Lord's" and not theirs.

Now as I stand on the west bank of the Limmat under the Lindenhof, I will read the Swiss German text of the new stone tablet: Here from a fisherman's platform in

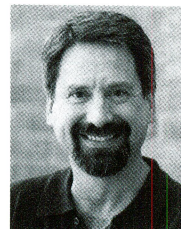
the middle of the Limmat, Felix Manz and five other Anabaptists were drowned during the Reformation between 1527 and 1532. The last Anabaptist executed in Zurich was Hans Landis in 1614.

This, I will say, is the new ending to the story. The Zurich persecutors, who for centuries had wished to forget this story but are now choosing to remember it, placed this marker here. They have acknowledged their "historic sin" and consider the persecution "a betrayal of the gospel." They have asked for our forgiveness.

We have acknowledged the threat our Anabaptist forebears posed to Zurich's ordered society during an era of turbulent changes. We understand that the Zurich reformers believed they were rediscovering the "liberating gospel of Jesus Christ," for which they were also willing "to give up their lives."

They and we are "branches of the one and the same bough of the great Christian tree." We are called to work together as God's reconciling ministers "in small things and great ones." Given this common charge, we can now feel at home in Zurich.

—John E. Sharp, editor



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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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